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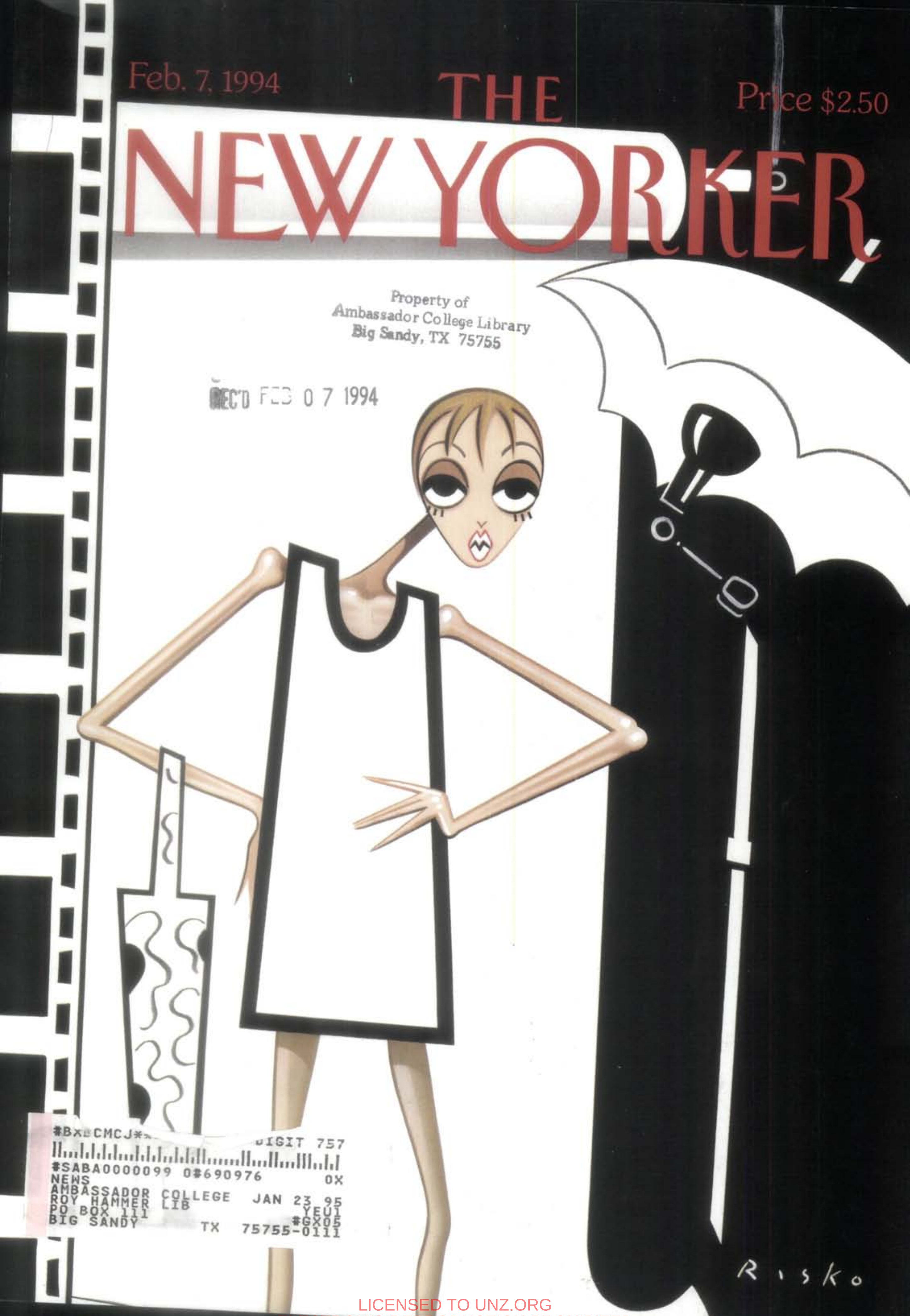

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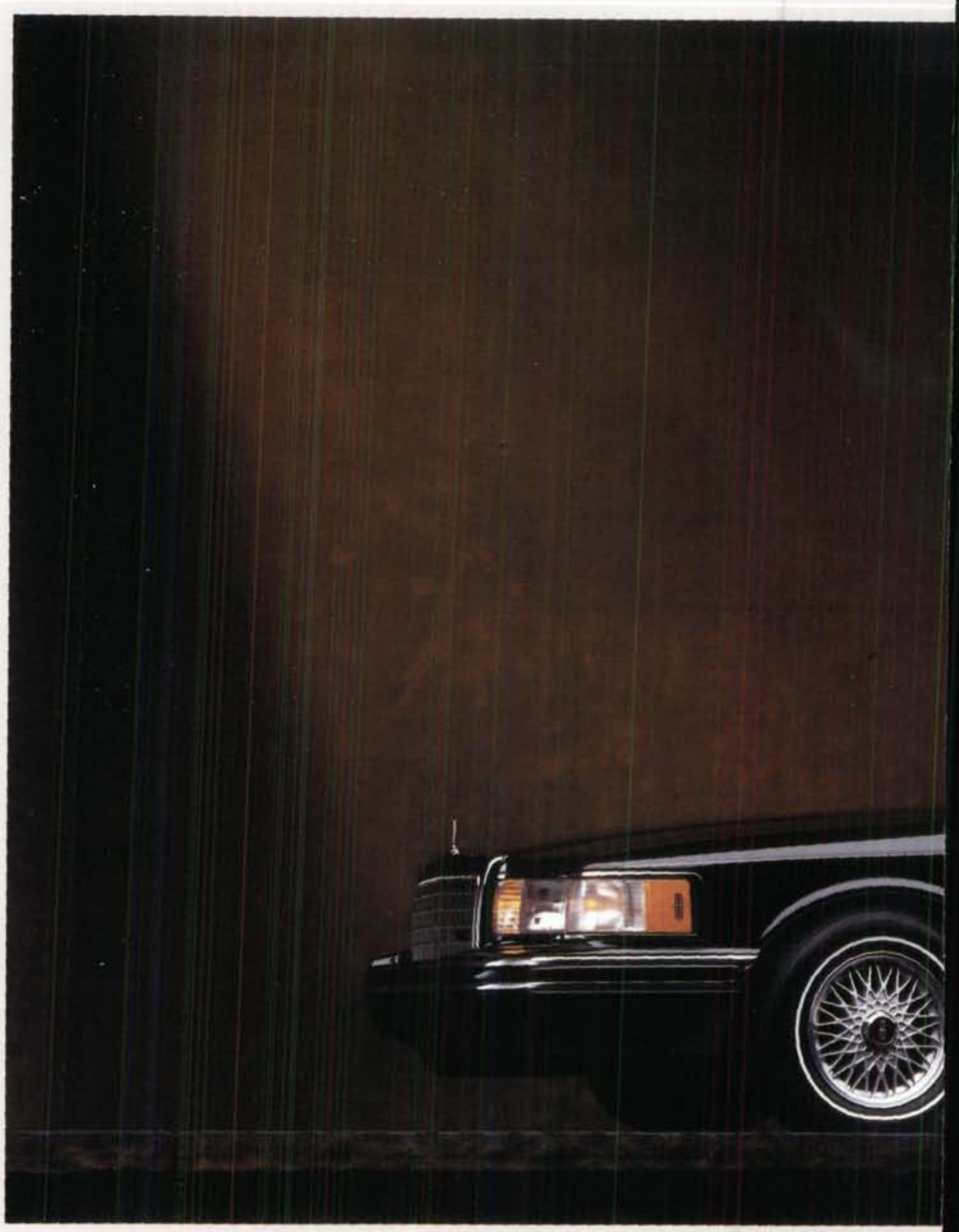

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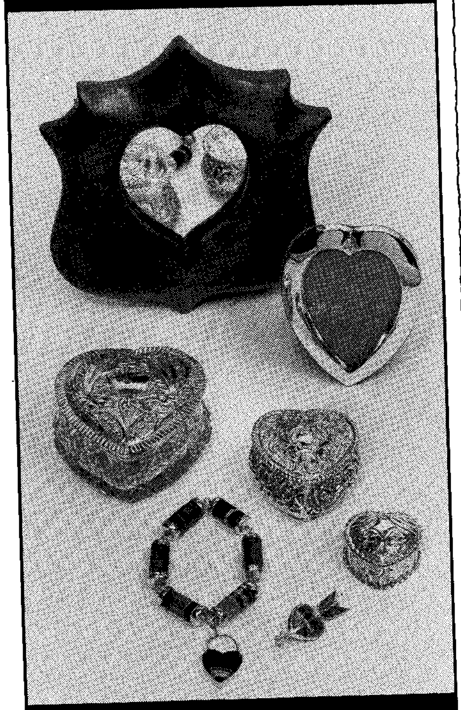

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COMMENT

GETTING BETTER

THE rhetorical shade of Ronald Reagan was all over the place last week in Bill Clinton's State of the Union address. It was there in the Capraesque cameos (Detective Kevin Jett, N.Y.P.D., take a bow). It was there in the emphasis on fighting crime and reforming welfare, and on reawakening the old-fashioned values of family, community, and work. It was there in the person of Reagan's own press secretary, James Brady, whose presence symbolized the eponymous gun-control bill that Clinton has signed into law. And it was there in the President's defiant, make-my-day pledge to veto any health-care legislation "that does not guarantee every American private health insurance that can never be taken away."

Republicans spent the rest of the week sputtering that Clinton was guilty of political larceny. But it is worth remembering that during the nineteen-eighties, when the shoe was on the other foot, the Democrats were forever complaining that Reagan had stolen his act from Franklin D. Roosevelt. Substantively, of course, Clinton is as far from Reagan as Reagan was from Roosevelt. But his ear for the American political idiom is similar in kind, if not yet in degree, to both his predecessors'.

On the issue of health care, Clinton has already succeeded in moving the national discussion a very great distance. It helps, of course, that the old terms of debate, "socialized medicine" vs. "the free market," are dead: the line of attack that universal health insurance would be the first step in the Sovietization of America is as defunct as the Soviet Union itself. The existing system of health care in this country satisfies almost no one, and Americans have begun to notice that universal health insurance in Germany, Japan, France, Israel, and all the other countries of the industrialized democratic world does not appear to be turning them into so many totalitarian ant heaps. Bob Dole, the Senate Republican leader, contented himself in his reply to Clinton's speech with anti-government boilerplate. But other Republicans—and not only moderates like Senator John Chafee but also

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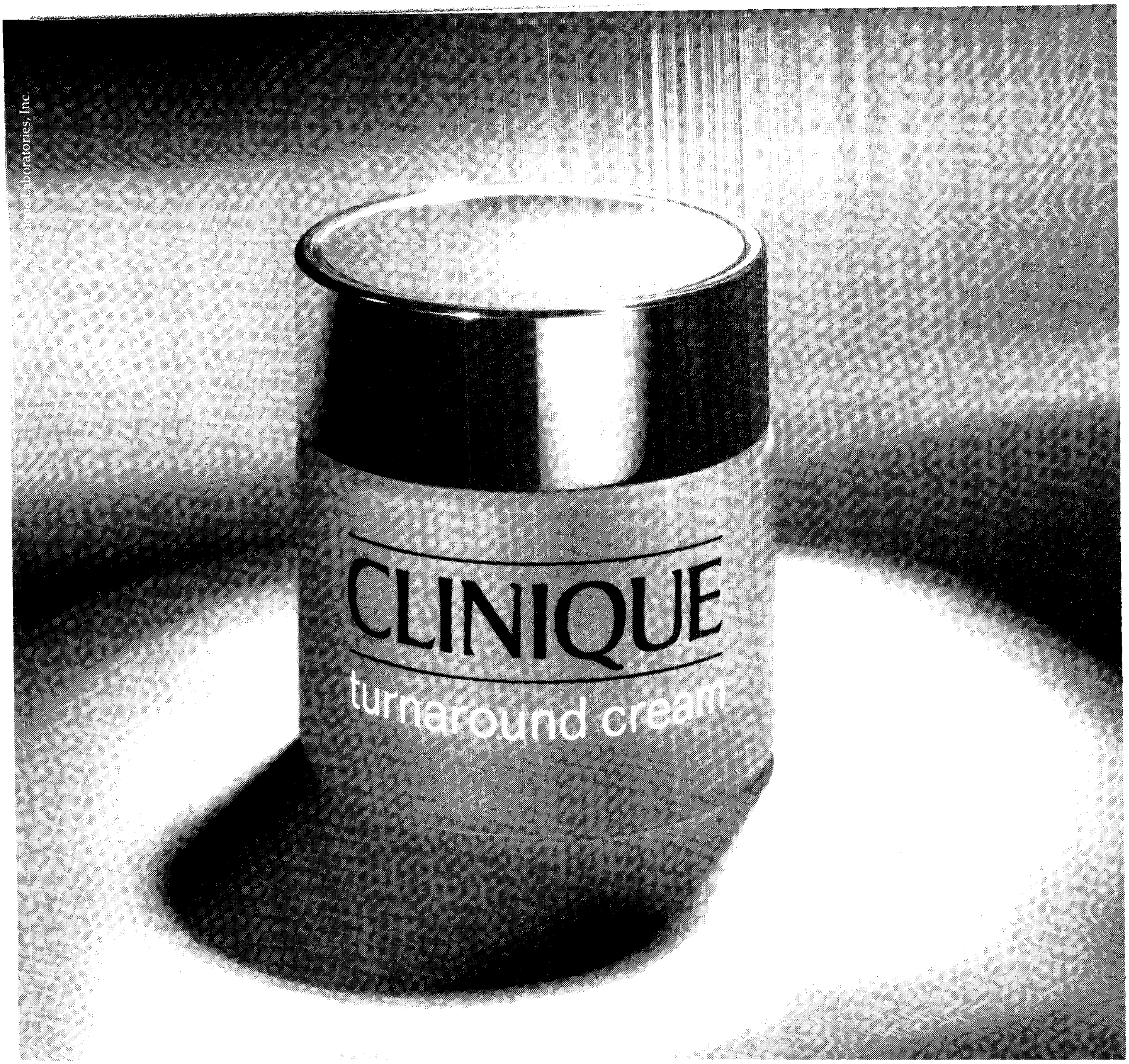

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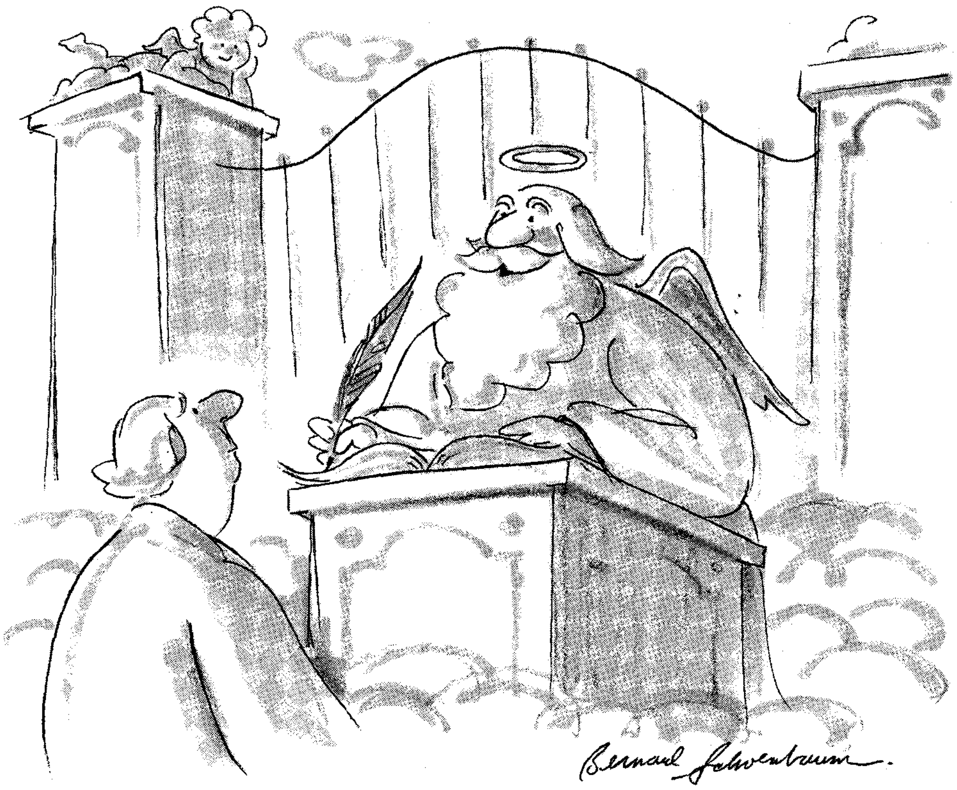

"Everything seems to be in order, except for a few critical comments by William Safire."

• •

conservatives like Haley Barbour, the Party chairman, and Newt Gingrich, the House minority whip—now acknowledge that there has to be a national solution, that it must address such problems as making health insurance accessible to people who have "preexisting conditions" or who change their jobs, and that public policy is the only instrument through which the problems can be solved. (Even Dole himself, in certain moods, has been heard to talk that way.) This is a shift akin to the Reagan-led shift in 1980, when government was cast as the problem, not the solution, and the agenda was dominated for a decade by tax-cutting (or, more accurately, by downward tax-shifting).

Some of Clinton's critics on the (for want of a better term) left wish he had proposed a "single-payer" approach, of the kind that has rendered the Canadian public well pleased, over all, with its health-care system. And some of Clinton's friends think that that is exactly what he would have done if the abstract merits of the hypothetical alternatives had been the only factor he needed to consider. But, given the American political system, in which powerful interest groups can block change at vulnerable points in Congress, and given the constellation of political forces in the United States at the moment, a nice, tidy, rational, sensible, humane Canadian-style system is not a possibility. The Clinton plan is the way it is because in order to run the gantlet of America's fragmented legislative machinery any plan must have the support of a working coalition that includes enough of the interested constituencies to prevail over the constituencies that oppose it—and that means, essentially, buying off just enough of those interests to prevail over the rest. Clinton must contend with the fact that the American political system is "conservative": not in the left-vs.-right sense but in the sense that it empowers the status quo by making change contingent on the agreement of three independently elected governments—the House, the Senate, and the Presidency. (This, by the way, makes it as hard for Republicans to abolish programs as for Democrats to establish them.)

Clinton's liberal critics think he should have embraced the Canadian option anyway, knowing that it would be defeated, and should then have made its defeat the central issue of this year's congressional elections, and perhaps of the 1996 Presidential race, too. What Clinton understands, and these critics do not, is that in this scenario the American people would simply—and perhaps rightly—direct their indignation against him. The President would not be hailed as a valiant battler for the good and the true; rather, he would be dismissed as an inept dreamer incapable of working with Congress.

The only guarantee the current debate offers is that the health-care system that emerges from it is going to be a mess. No matter whether Clinton's plan is passed or some compromise is reached or the status quo is preserved, the American health-care system will continue to be a monstrous, complicated, wheezing, leaky, misshapen, expensive Rube Goldberg machine. The real issue in the current debate is not efficiency vs. inefficiency, or "bureaucracy" vs. "the market"; it is whether or not the President, Congress, and the people will seize this chance to enact into law the principle of universal health care. For if this opportunity is missed, another one is not likely come along for a generation or more.

When Medicare was adopted, in 1965, Lyndon Johnson had behind him huge Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress, the sixties mood of reform, the guilt left by the Kennedy assassination, and his own landslide victory (he got sixty-one per cent of the vote) in the 1964 Presidential election. Clinton has none of that. He won the election with forty-three per cent of a discouraged electorate. He has smaller, shakier majorities in Congress, he has his own passion (and Hillary's), and he has the threat of a veto, which is designed as much to discipline his own party's legislators as to intimidate the Republicans. Bill Clinton has bravely staked his Presidency on a calculated risk that he can pull off a Roosevelt-size reform with a James Buchanan-size mandate. It's a risk worth taking. ♦

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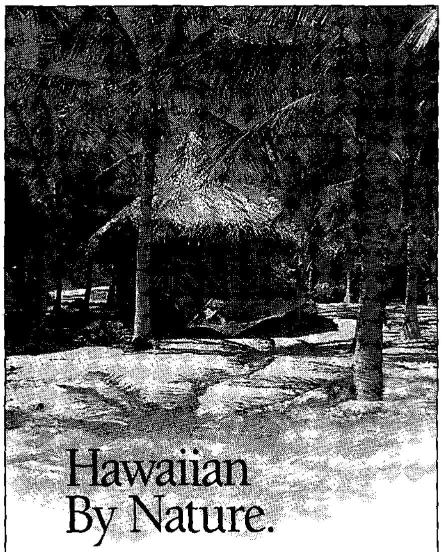

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IN THE MAIL

NO E-MAIL FROM BILL

John Seabrook writes about the response to his January 10th article, "E-Mail from Bill":

I started using E-mail last October, as a way of interviewing Bill Gates, the chairman of Microsoft, and since then I've cultivated a few E-mail correspondents—one of them being my mother, who has complained for years about how people don't write letters anymore. But Gates was my only regular E-mailer, and my electronic mailbox was usually empty when I checked it. On the morning that the article appeared on the newsstands, I checked my mailbox and found it stuffed: twenty-nine messages. In the following three weeks, I received three hundred and ninety-six electronic messages from readers, almost all of them strangers. Over that period, I also received eight phone calls about the article, seven letters, and one fax. In recent days, the volume of E-mail has slowed somewhat, but I'm still getting about fifteen messages a day. In my greenness about the information highway, I put my E-mail address in the article, and now I suppose I will be hearing from readers for years.

From: edelson@ils.nwu.edu
I'm partway through your New Yorker article, which I'm finding very interesting, and I noticed something curious. As I sat here wondering about it, I realized I could e-mail you and ask you. . . .

From: jazz@fry.halcyon.com
Maybe you want to know something about me. . . . I'm 12 and in the 7th grade at the international school. . . . I play baseball and basketball, and right now the ring finger on my left hand is jammed so it's a bit hard to type. Anyway . . . oh never mind.

From: dulap@aol.com
Your Plato analogy about software doesn't work beyond the simple textbook level. Plato has two regions of "invisibles," the mathematicals and the theologicals. In the former, numbers are indeterminate, &, thus, incapable of determining culture. Aristotle might be invoked more profitably.

From: peter911sc@aol.com
Real problem with the Information Superhighway is typified by this letter: God only knows how many idiots like me will tie up your time with responses.

A lot of people shared their own thoughts about the nature of electronic communication.

From: 76645,1453@compuserve.com
I'm still trying to figure out how, precisely, e-mail is different from other communications, why I don't mind writing e-mail but hate writing letters, and why e-mail makes me feel as if I am free to send a bunch of nonsense to you, a person I've never met & likely will never meet, when I would never do so if it meant writing it down on paper & putting it in the snail mail.

From: 70733,3625@compuserve.com
E-mailing has revived the art of letter writing, and I love it, but in some ways it's *too* easy. I suppose I'm old-fashioned and like some hierarchy, some distance. I remember writing a letter to Pauline Kael and she wrote back; it was wonderful, but part of that was my sense that here was this person who I had admired all my life and thought I'd never touch in any way and she's writing a letter to *me*. But . . . this is not at all the kind of interaction you have with e-mail. It's just not at all the same thing.

From: sitter1@husc.harvard.edu
Enjoyed article. Is this communicating or what?

If a message was particularly complimentary, I clicked the "Forward" icon and sent it on to my mother.

From: 72733,3174@compuserve.com
I just finished reading all the messages you sent me. I nearly cried several times I was so thrilled at the reaction and the compliments to you. And laughed at some of

them. How come the spacing was so weird with only one word on some lines? I trust you will copy them all and take the stack in to Tina.

I received several requests for electronic reproductions of the piece. I replied that I didn't have one, and reminded people (sweetly) that the copyright belonged to me, and that *The New Yorker* held certain reprint rights, and that the usual procedure was to ask my permission and, in some cases, to pay me. I realize that in saying this I was violating the spirit of the Net, which is all about sharing, and I was sort of surprised at myself, but the idea that my piece could be completely out of my or *The New Yorker's* control, that it could be reproduced thousands or millions of times, that it could be rewritten or reëdited or even re-bylined sort of frightened me.

Who were these readers? Many were nameless, placeless, and genderless. They were not like the readers I was acquainted with from previous pieces I'd written, people with whom I'd exchanged old-fashioned letters—perhaps as many as fifteen per piece. A fine, clear, warm letter is still, I think, a richer communication than an electronic message, especially if it is handwritten, but one receives very few of these. Of course, most readers don't write at all.

These new readers obviously do write. Some write just for the fun of it. Very few write because they want something from me, other than a response. Many people write to share a thought, and perhaps that is why people used to write to each other. In spite of the lack of felicitations and salutations, and of letter-writing courtesies, the E-mail I received was a good deal more civilized than the average letter. Many messages began with people begging my pardon for taking up my time, something that letters almost never do. In all my three hundred and ninety-six messages, there was not one rude or angry word. You'd think that a block of type scrolling across a glowing screen would seem more impersonal than a letter, but it doesn't. E-mail is so lively that you almost expect the type to start squirming on your screen as you read it.

At first, receiving this quantity of E-mail was thrilling, and I thought practically all the time about checking my mailbox. After about forty-eight hours, however, I noticed that the volume of thought streaming through my computer was making my head feel unpleasantly stuffed. After about a week, I began to get more efficient at handling the flow of communication: I learned to communicate in batches. Hemingway once referred to the telephone as a "work destroyer," and I agree with him, but I found that corresponding with thirty people a day on E-mail fitted almost seamlessly into my work and, in some ways, enhanced it (whereas answering my letters meant setting time apart from work). Now I find myself looking forward more to composing E-mail than to receiving it. My E-mail sessions are sort of like meditation. Composing E-mail composes me.

One reader (73631,744@compuserve.com) sent me E-mail saying she had sent E-mail to Bill, in which she asked him how he escapes the stresses of his job, and suggesting yoga, and also inquiring why Gates likes the novel "A Separate Peace" so much. About a week later she E-mailed me again and included Gates' response:

From: billg
No yoga yet.
A separate peace is about growing up and finding your place in the world. It deals with innocence and a youthful intelligence trying to find its way.

I envied 73631,744. I myself have received no E-mail from Bill since "E-Mail from Bill" was published. I've thought about sending more E-mail to him, but I'm apprehensive of a software device called a bozo filter, which people who get lots of E-mail use for winnowing out unwanted messages. What if Bill should bozo-filter me? Like many journalists, I have always operated on the assumption that if I didn't hear from the subject of a published story I must have done something right, but I want E-mail from Bill. I crave it. By making it so easy to communicate with people, E-mail changes the nature of communication; but E-mail also, I now know, changes the nature of silence. The silence of no E-mail is unlike the silence of a quiet telephone or an empty mailbox. It is thunderous.

73124,1524@compuserve.com

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

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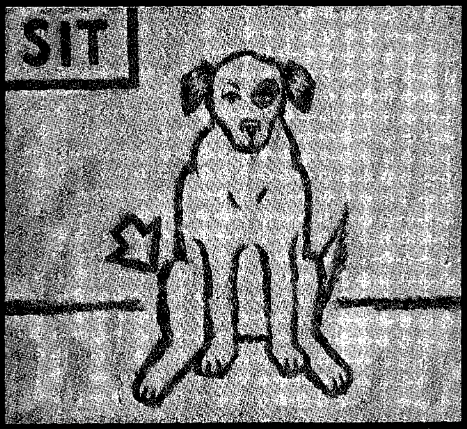
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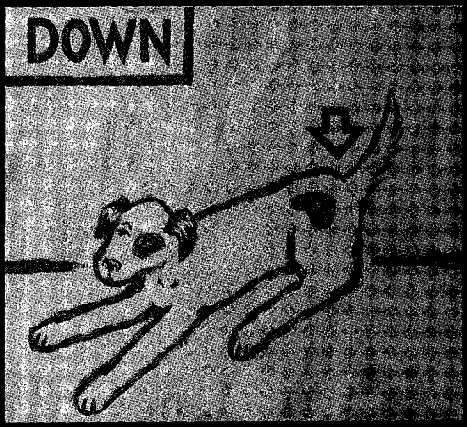
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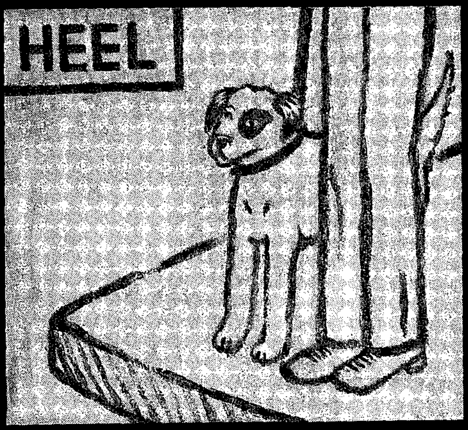
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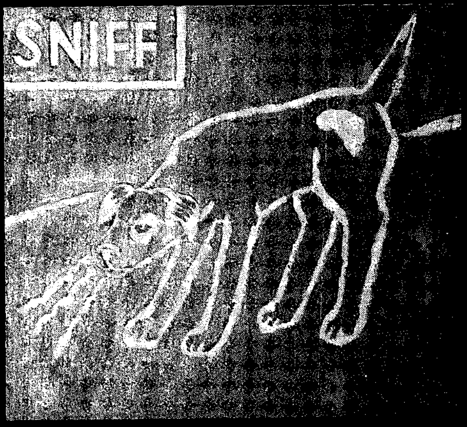
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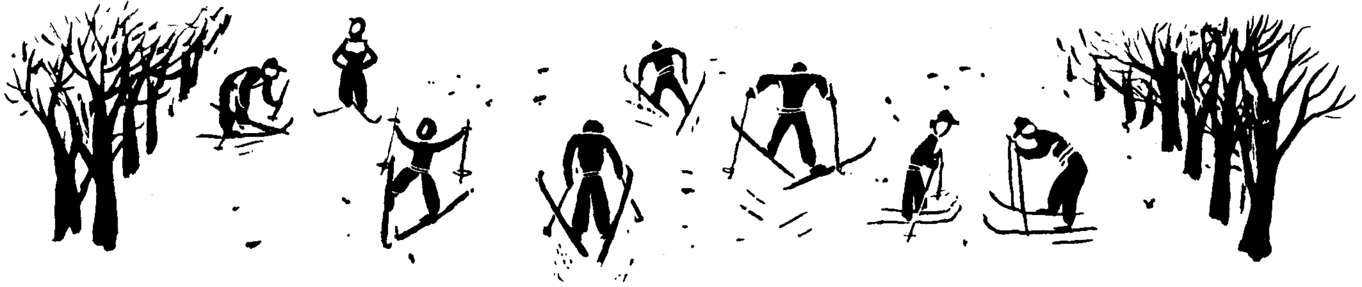

THE THEATRE

Over Here

Two remarkable members of London's young theatre crowd are in New York this week. Mark Rylance, the most daring Royal Shakespeare Company Hamlet in recent memory and an effervescent Benedick last year in the West End, has directed a production of "As You Like It" for Theatre for a New Audience (at St. Clement's, 423 West 46th Street). It's a thoughtful, unfussy production that bolsters the theatre's commitment to ensemble acting and plainspoken editions of the classics. Mr. Rylance may play the fool as an actor (he's Touchstone here), but as a director he's the sage.

Another R.S.C. veteran, Fiona Shaw, will be appearing locally on February 7, in a benefit for the Acting Company, to be held, fittingly, in a theatre named for that ensemble's founder, John Houseman (450 West 42nd Street). In her film roles over the past few years, Miss Shaw has had to dim ("Undercover Blues") or dumb down ("Super Mario Bros.") her talent somewhat. Onstage, however—most memorably as Elektra and as Mary, Queen of Scots—she can be electric. Her one-night engagement is called "Shakespeare and Friends, Ibsen and Enemies."

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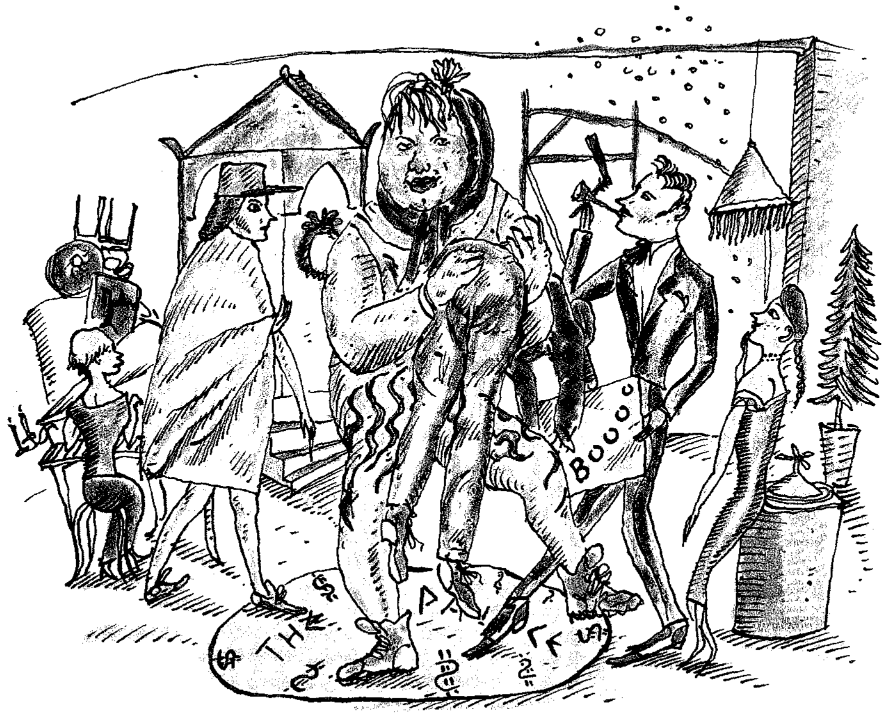
OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Avenue X—An a-cappella musical set in Brooklyn in 1963, by John Jiler and Ray Leslee. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Circle Repertory Company—Previews of Jenna Zark's play "A Body of Water" alternate with those of Regina Taylor's one-woman show "Escape from Paradise." (99 Seventh Ave. S. 924-7100.)



Claire van Kampen, Michael Rudko, David Dossey, Mark Rylance, and Miriam Healy-Louie in "As You Like It."

Pounding Nails in the Floor with My Forehead—Eric Bogosian's latest piece. Preview on Feb. 2. Opens Feb. 3 at 7. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 307-4100.)

Ricky Jay & His 52 Assistants—The sleight-of-hand artist and his playing cards, in a show directed by David Mamet. Previews through Feb. 5. Opens Feb. 6 at 7. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Shakespeare and Friends, Ibsen and Enemies—Fiona Shaw performs in a one-night-only benefit for the Acting Company. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Feb. 7 at 8.)

Smiling Through—Music of the forties is spotlighted in this show about a music-hall performer, portrayed by Vicki Stuart. Written by Ivan Menchell, Miss Stuart's son. Opens Feb. 2 at 6:30. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 757-3900.)

Three Birds Alighting on a Field—A play by Timberlake Wertenbaker. Directed by Max Stafford-Clark, of London's Royal Court Theatre, where the work premièred. Previews through Feb. 6. Opens Feb. 8 at 8. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Three Tall Women—A new play by Edward Albee, with Marian Seldes, Jordan Baker, and Myra Carter. In previews. (Vineyard Theatre, 108 E. 15th St. 353-3874.)

OPENED RECENTLY

All in the Timing—An evening of six sparkling one-act comedies by David Ives. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 777-7474. Closes Feb. 13.)

Angels in America—"Perestroika," the second half of Tony Kushner's "Angels in America," is a masterpiece. Epic in scope, superbly acted, and directed with passionate restraint by George C. Wolfe, the play employs an original, impressionistic theatrical vocabulary to show us the heart of a new age. It runs in repertory with the first half, "Millennium Approaches." ("Perestroika" was reviewed in our issue of 12/13/93; "Millennium Approaches," 5/31/93.) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Annie Warbucks—Kathryn Zaremba, an infant phenomenon if ever there was one, has the title role in this beguiling sequel to "Annie." (8/23 & 30/93) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

As You Like It—Theatre for a New Audience presents Shakespeare's comedy, directed by Mark Rylance, who also plays Touchstone. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 19.)

Birdbones—In Dudley Saunders' one-man show, he tells the story of a poor, Southern single mother and her two children, a chronically abused family with terrible luck. This may sound grim, but Mr. Saunders' writing and his performance have power, humor, and grace; the evening has more in common with Tennessee Williams than with kitchen-sink Southern Gothic. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Closes Feb. 6.)

Blown Sideways Through Life—In her sixty-fifth job, Claudia Shear charmingly and observantly tells us about her previous sixty-four, which have ranged from working in a hardware store to being a "phone girl" at a whorehouse, with a stint as a Bloomingdale's cosmetics salesgirl thrown in. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2285.)

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John Mauceri: American Classics • (Philips) 83824 ¢

Yuri Temirkanov: Rimsky-Korsakov, Scheherazade (RCA) 00653

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THE THEATRE–*Cont'd*

Booth—Austin Pendleton's ambitious first play is a historical drama about the thespian and Oedipal rivalry between the nineteenth-century Shakespearean actor Junius Brutus Booth and his son Edwin Booth. (Edwin's brother John Wilkes is a minor character.) Frank Langella and Garret Dillahunt are very good as Junius and Edwin. Directed by David Schweizer and presented by the York Theatre Company. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 534-5366. Closes Feb. 13.)

Cyrano: The Musical—The nose have it. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Day Standing on Its Head—A middle-aged law professor of Hawaiian and Japanese extraction, who turned conservative after falling out with the Asian-American student movement at the end of the sixties, has lost his way: his wife no longer loves him, and his students think he's irrelevant. What keeps Philip Kan Gotanda's play from being a predictable midlife-crisis drama is the unflaggingly clever direction of Oskar Eustis. With Keone Young as the professor. Kati Kuroda is wonderful as the professor's mother. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Feb. 13.)

East Texas Hot Links—The "hot links" of Eugene Lee's play, set in 1955 in a bar deep in the piney woods of East Texas, refer not only to spicy country sausages (and to something lewd) but also to the highly charged connections between the seven black men who frequent the bar and the woman who owns it. Mr. Lee, who is also an actor, has certainly written some good lines for his cast, but several characters seem pulled out of a bag of stereotypes, and while the play is shocking, it never surprises. Directed by Marion McClinton. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Feb. 13.)

Family Secrets—Sherry Glaser is the sole, physically adept, very funny performer in this comedy about a Jewish family, which she wrote with Greg Howells. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Four Dogs and a Bone—The "bone" of John Patrick Shanley's satiric comedy is a movie, and the "four dogs" are its producer, writer, and two actresses, who together make the funniest foursome in town. (11/15/93) (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782.)

The Government Inspector—The National Actors Theatre presents Nikolai Gogol's satiric comedy. The cast includes Lainie Kazan and Tony Randall. (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280. Closes Feb. 6.)

Hello Again—A new musical by Michael John LaChiusa, loosely based on Arthur Schnitzler's play "La Ronde." With Judy Blazer, John Dossett, John Cameron Mitchell, and Donna Murphy. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

The Illusion—Tony Kushner's version of Corneille's "L'Illusion Comique." (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Feb. 13.)

In Bed with the Blues: The Adventures of Fishy Waters—A play written by and starring Guy Davis. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. 576-9028. Closes Feb. 13.)

Irene Worth's Portrait of Edith Wharton—Miss Worth, looking sleek and elegant in a Fortuny gown, gives a reading of passages drawn from Wharton's memoir, "A Backward Glance," and from her other writings, and explores the eventful inner and outer life of this year's literary It Girl. Miss Worth's intonations have an air of self-satisfaction that doesn't seem true to Wharton, but the evening has its moments, such as her impersonation of Henry James asking for directions on a motoring trip and taking forever about it. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Closes Feb. 13.)

Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat—Like a kaleidoscope, Andrew Lloyd Webber's flippant new mega-version of his first musical is bright, ever-changing, and utterly meaningless. (Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Kiss of the Spider Woman—A musical, based on the novel by Manuel Puig, with a distinguished book by Terrence McNally and a star performance by the redoubtable Chita Rivera in the title role. Harold Prince was the director. The songs are by John Kander and Fred Ebb. (5/24/93) (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Laughter on the 23rd Floor—Neil Simon's twenty-seventh Broadway play, about a group of writers for a fictionalized version of "Your Show of Shows," is one of his finest comic efforts. The subject allows Simon to do what he does best: tell jokes about the making of laughs. Directed by Jerry Zaks, with Mark Linn-Baker, Lewis J. Stadlen, Nathan Lane, Ron Orbach, John Slattery, and J. K. Simmons. (12/20/93) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

My Fair Lady—Howard Davies' genial new production of the Lerner and Loewe musical. Richard Chamberlain is all charm and suave good looks as Professor Henry Higgins, and Melissa Errico lends a fine voice and an attractive presence to the role of Eliza. (1/17/94) (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

No Man's Land—Christopher Plummer and Jason Robards star in Harold Pinter's 1975 play. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Old New York: False Dawn—The New York Art Theatre Institute's charming version of the first chapter of Edith Wharton's novella "Old New York." (Old Merchant's House Museum, 29 E. 4th St. 226-6211.)

She Loves Me—The Roundabout's production of the 1963 Bock-Harnick-Masteroff musical. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 307-4100.)

Stitches—David and Amy Sedaris's satiric comedy about celebrity. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Closes Feb. 5.)

Those the River Keeps—A play by David Rabe, with Paul Guilfoyle and Annabella Sciorra. Mr. Rabe directed. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

Wifey—Sitars hammer; incense wafts; the audience lounges on rust-colored cushions: such is the setting for Tom Noonan's new play, which details the encounter-group-like concerns of two couples (Noonan and Julie Hagerty, and Wallace Shawn and Karen Young). There's a fascination—albeit a limited one—with watching the quick, filmic acting going on, and performers' attempts to make something of lines like, "I feel your authenticity." (Paradise Theatre, 64 E. 4th St. 979-7362. Closes Feb. 6.)

Reggie Wilson at Dance Theatre Workshop.

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLOOD BROTHERS:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE SISTERS ROSENSWEIG:** Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE WHO'S TOMMY:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY— PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

"The Art of Hanging Fire"—The T.W.E.E.D. company offers a multimedia work based on the life and art of the sculptor Eva Hesse, who died in 1970. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 924-0077. Feb. 2-6 at 7:30. Through Feb. 12.)

"The Duplex Planet Radio Hour"—David Greenberger continues his series of monologues based on interviews with nursing-home residents. (St. Ann's Church, 157 Montague St., Brooklyn. 1-718 858-2424. Feb. 6 at 7.)

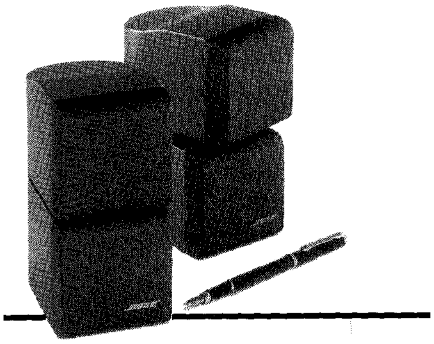
DANCE

The Last Word

"YOU'VE heard of a frozen shoulder? Well, I had frozen hip." Merrill Ashley, senior ballerina of New York City Ballet and one of the purest embodiments of the style George Balanchine created on that company, is explaining the injury that kept her out of point roles from 1991 to 1993. Last year, she got back on her toes again—but only for a week. She came onstage one night, did a few steps, screamed, crumbled to the floor, and had to be carried offstage. She had broken a bone in her foot. "I had to ask myself, 'Was it worth the work to come back one more time?'" Ashley says. "Yes, it was." Now she's back yet again. She has to choose her roles carefully—high extensions of the leg are hard for her—and she spends six hours a day with a chiropractor. But she feels her dancing usually improves after an injury: "I can't get into certain positions, so I find something new to give."

Ashley was probably the greatest allegro dancer of our time, a miracle of speed, clarity, and musicality, Balanchine's three principles. As she nears the end of her stage career (she's forty-three), she says her goal is "to set an example of what Balanchine wanted. Epaulement, a good, tight fifth position—I think a living example is better than words." She's scheduled to perform in Balanchine's "Symphony in C" on February 5. (Call the box office to make sure.) We had almost forgotten what a joy it is to see her dance.

CALEF BROWN



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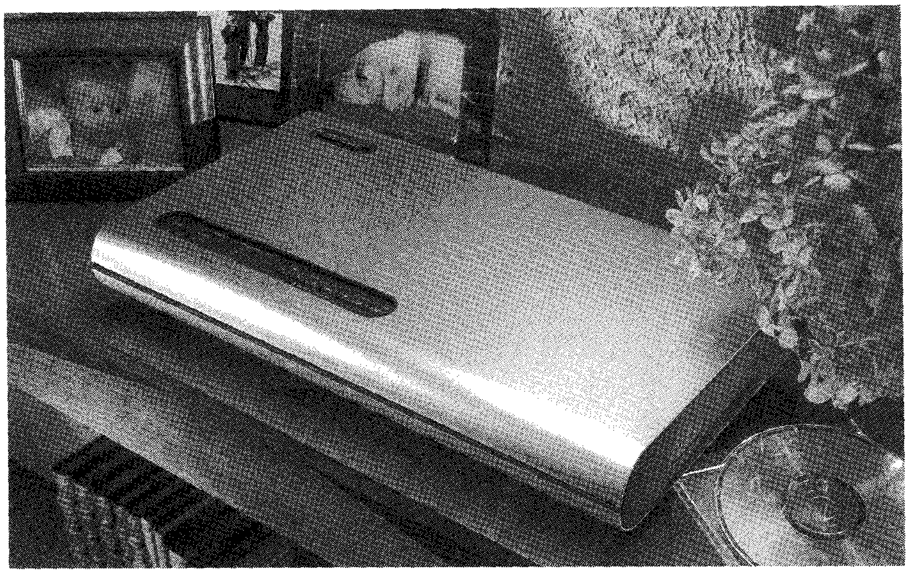

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DANCE–Cont'd

New York City Ballet—Feb. 2 at 8: "The Chairman Dances," "Zakouski," "Ancient Airs and Dances," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ Feb. 3 at 8: "Fanfare," "Symphonic Dances" (première), and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ Feb. 4 at 8: "Coppélia.". . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 2: "Chaconne," "Ancient Airs and Dances," and "I'm Old Fashioned." . . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 8: "Symphonic Dances," "Moves," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 1: "The Chairman Dances," "Zakouski," "Moves," and "Symphony in C." . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 7: "Fanfare," "Pavane," "Herman Schmerman," and "Vienna Waltzes." . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 8: "Coppélia." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 27.)

Nikolais and Murray Louis Dance—Feb. 2-3 at 8: "A Stravinsky Montage," "Tides," "Interims," and "Tent.". . . ¶ Feb. 4-5 and Feb. 8 at 8 and Feb. 6 at 5: "Index," "Horizons" (première), "Alone" (United States première), and "Four Brubeck Pieces." (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Through Feb. 13.)

Elisa Monte Dance—"Mandeville," "Diamond Song," "Vejle / Border Crossing," "Absolute Rule," and "Audentity." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave. at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 2-5 at 8 and Feb. 6 at 2 and 7:30.)

Reggie Wilson—With ten dancers, in "holy," a program of dances choreographed by Wilson that explore the African identity. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Feb. 3-5 at 8 and Feb. 6 at 3.)

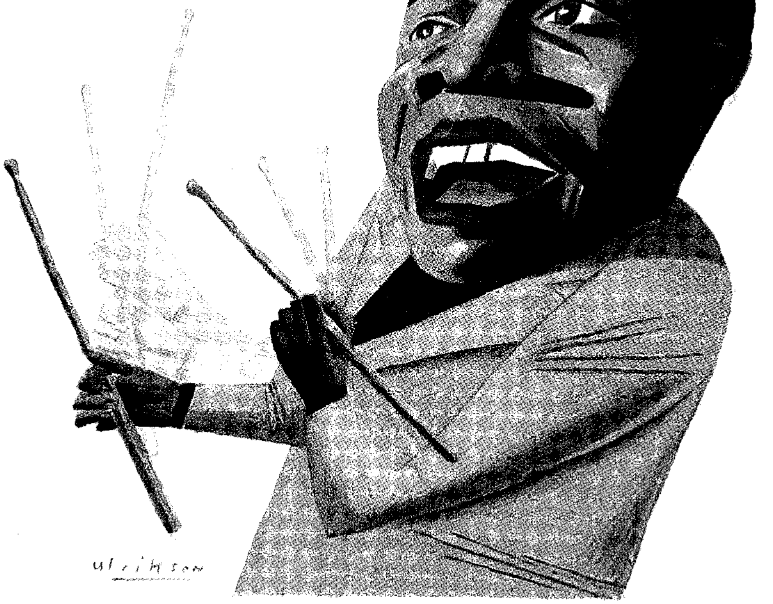
Lucinda Childs Dance Company—The opening of a one-week engagement. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 8 at 7:30. Through Feb. 13.)

NIGHT LIFE

Full Bloom

Rosemary Clooney first graced the high-altitude cabaret Rainbow & Stars five years ago, and every February since then she has returned for a monthlong engagement. (Too bad February is the shortest month of the year.) Forty-three years after this Kentucky songbird had her first big hit—"Come On-a My House," a nutty song written by William Saroyan and his cousin Ross Bagdasarian, who later gave the world Alvin and the Chipmunks—her voice is still warm and welcoming. Personal problems stalled her career and nearly ruined her life during a good part of the sixties and seventies, but there's nothing bitter or backward-looking about her. In performance and on record she's fresh and bouncy and funny, and, like her fellow-sexagenarian Tony Bennett, she seems to be attracting an ever broader audience.

Some of the credit for Clooney's second wind belongs to her musical director and pianist, John Oddo, who has provided her with attentive, loving accompaniment on a host of fine albums over the past ten years, including last year's "Do You Miss New York?," which was just nominated for a Grammy, and her brand-new offering, "Still on the Road." Mr. Oddo, along with Clooney stalwarts Warren Vaché, Scott Hamilton, Jay Leonhart, and Joe Cocuzzo, will be here with her for the duration, helping her to make you believe, in the dead of winter, that spring has sprung.



Elvin Jones at Alice Tully Hall.

MARK ULRIKSEN

CONCERTS

Max Roach/The Uptown String Quartet—Max Roach, the most melodic of all drummers, is one of the few percussionists who can sustain a solo performance. The Uptown String Quartet (with Roach's daughter, Maxine, on viola) is an American band, touching on spirituals, Joplin rags, modern jazz, and contemporary originals with ease and refinement. The season opener for the "New Sounds Live" series. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. 362-8719. Feb. 3 at 8.)

"Music Makes Me"—A trip back to the thirties and into the heart of Radioland, chaperoned by the apparently immortal chanteuse Hildegarde (who was there, then) and such latter-day practitioners of song, comedy, and gossip as singer-actors Marian Steiner, Phillip Officer, John Scherer, David Staller (who directed), and Harriet Fay and her Society Orchestra. Music by the usual suspects: Kern, Berlin, Gershwin, and the rest. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Feb. 4 at 8.)

Rick Danko and Garth Hudson—The Band just released a new album (minus lead guitarist Robbie Robertson, and minus pianist Richard Manuel, who committed suicide in 1986) and reunited at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony (minus drummer Levon Helm). Death and feuds may mean that the great days are over for The Band, but all its members except Manuel are still alive and kicking: attention must be paid. Keyboard player Garth Hudson, with his bearded sodbuster's face and his mad-organist trances, and bassist-singer Rick Danko, with his mournful, pleading voice, will pair up with a fascinating pickup band for this benefit concert, and it will be wonderful, as always, to hear their music. (P.S. 226M, 345 E. 15th St. Feb. 4 at 8. For information about tickets, call 628-0669.)

"A Love Supreme: Elvin Jones and Friends"—During their tenure together in the nineteen-sixties, the late John Coltrane and his powerhouse drummer Elvin Jones seemed joined at the hip; as Trane pushed the multitonal envelope, Jones was right with him step for step. This show should be a tribute to the drummer as much as it is for Coltrane—Jones has lost none of his explosive energy or astonishing ability to move the beat in a thousand directions at once. Otherwise, the concert is an occasion for Wynton Marsalis to ask the musical question: What if they gave a tribute to John Coltrane and didn't invite any saxophonists? It's nearly impossible to read the minds of the Jazz at Lincoln Center honchos, but even their skewed logic shouldn't affect this meeting between Marsalis and Jones. Playing Coltrane's durable tunes in a quartet setting, these two featured stars will have plenty of room to tussle. And with Jones's maelstrom behind him, Marsalis will have no place to hide. He'll either put out or get out. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Feb. 6 at 8:30.)

Sid Selvidge—Winter Garden, World Financial Center, Battery Park City. Feb. 2 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.

Tommy Flanagan Trio—Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 4 at 8.

Gospel Music—The Timothy Wright Choir, the Brooklyn College Gospel Choir, Spirit in Black, and the Wingate and Brooklyn Tech High School Choirs. (Walt Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts, Brooklyn College. 1-718 951-4500. Feb. 4 at 8.)

John Raitt—Bonnie's dad sings songs from shows he's been in, including "Carousel," "The Pajama Game," "Annie Get Your Gun," and "Oklahoma!" (Walt Whitman Hall, Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts. Feb. 5 at 8.)

Kavkazi—A three-member ensemble that plays music of Azerbaijan. (Washington Square Church, 135 W. 4th St. Feb. 5 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Merengue Concert—Los Hermanos Rosarios, Jossie Esteban, La Patrulla 15, Johnny Ventura y La Band Loca, Los Sabrosos del Merengue, and others. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Feb. 5 at 8 and Feb. 6 at 6.)

JAZZ AND BLUES

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—A quirky, endearing Village watering hole, perpetually decorated for the holidays—all of them. The musicians work in the back of the room, in a well ringed by a bar—a setup that seems to bring out the latent showbiz tendencies in some of the bar's patrons. Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy and John Parker, Fridays to the George Stubbs trio and the Freddy Francis trio (also here on Saturdays), and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band.

RECORD STORE ARRIVALS

A highly selective list of new releases we're curious to hear.

"IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER" (Island).
GIANT SAND, "Purge And Slouch" (Restless).
COLLIN RAYE, "Extremes" (Epic).
ALICE IN CHAINS, "Jar of Flies" (Columbia).
"THE LEVELLERS" (Elektra).
THE MEAT PUPPETS, "Too High to Die" (London).
CYRUS CHESTNUT, "Revelation" (Atlantic).
SARAH MC LACHLAN, "Fumbling Towards Ecstasy" (Arista).
TORI AMOS, "Under the Pink" (Atlantic).
MC COY TYNER BIG BAND, "Journey" (Verve).
BIKINI KILL, "Pussy Whipped" (Kill Rock Stars).
KHALED, "N'ssi N'ssi" (London Cohiba/Mango).

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—The **JOE SAMPLE** trio continues through Feb. 6. Beginning Feb. 8: **IVAN LINS.** Enormously popular in his native Brazil, Lins hasn't "crossed over" onto the American charts, something of a blessing for fans of his hip, intelligent songwriting. His new record, "Awa Yio," is a feast of jazzy salsa grooves and velvety Portuguese melodies. Dining.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—On any given night, and well into the morning, one or another of New York's many formidable pianists can be found here, shoehorned into a corner with the resplendent Baldwin that Paul Desmond bequeathed to the late Bradley Cunningham. The **EDDIE HENDERSON** trio is in through Feb. 5. Dining.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—Through Feb. 6: the **CHARLIE BYRD** trio. Singer **CAROL SLOAN** begins on Feb. 8. Sloan's on-again, off-again career is on again. In a world of vocal showoffs, she stands out by grounding her art in mellifluous tones, sure rhythm, and great taste. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—**ROLAND HANNA** is here through Feb. 5. Hanna's impressive résumé includes stints with Mingus and Sarah Vaughan, but he is best known for his groundbreaking piano work with the New York Jazz Quartet. Paul West is on bass.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—On Feb. 6: the **PARADOX TRIO** is hosting a benefit for Bosnia. Point man Matt Darriau plays a variety of instruments, including reeds, flutes, and gaida (a Bulgarian bagpipe), matched by the group's range of music. This hardworking quartet (that's the paradox) makes joyful music with an edge, and it all happens—from rhythmic klezmer to offbeat Balkan tunes—with apparent ease. With the athletic Seido Salifoski on dümbeks and percussion, Rufus Cappadocia on electric cello, and Brad Schoeppach on guitar.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The Upper East Side Blues. On Feb. 3: an alumnus of Chuck Berry's band, pianist **JOHNNIE JOHNSON** is, in Paul Schaeffer's humble estimation, "the godfather of rock and roll." Johnson currently has an album out with the Kentucky Headhunters; it's called "That'll Work," and it does.

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 495 Second Ave., at 28th St. (686-1210)—Prepare for a packed room, flowing Guinness, and an Irish-hootenanny atmosphere. **BLACK 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A place where a fella and a gal can put on the feedbag, get a little tight, and cut a rug. Mondays belong to the Smith Street Society jazz band; Tuesdays to Jim Lawyer and his Bluebird Society Orchestra; Thursdays to Stan Rubin's big band; Fridays to Lew Anderson's big band and Sam Ulano and his Bourbon Street Swingers; and Saturdays to Bob Cantwell and his Stompers.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—The **ENJA ALL-STARS** appear through Feb. 6. The All-Stars—saxophonist Willie Williams, pianist Uri Caine, bassist Michael Formanek, drummer Cecil Brooks III, and vibist Gust William Tsilis—aren't hard-bop obsessives, and their reasoned swinging doesn't preclude experimentation; the band is full of challenging composers and underrated, forward-thinking players. Starting Feb. 8: the **ETHNIC HERITAGE ENSEMBLE,** with **KAHIL EL ZABAR, JOSEPH BOWIE,** and **EDWARD WILKERSON.** The Zebra Coast Orchestra, conducted by Gil Goldstein, is in action on Feb. 7. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—This legendary tourist haven is making a bid to attract serious jazz fans. Through Feb. 6: the **FREDDY COLE** trio. The **BENNY GREEN** trio begins on Feb. 8. Dining.

Time Café, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—Hidden inside this restaurant is a two-story club called Fez, where the **MINGUS BIG BAND** packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble, directed by baritone saxophonist Ronnie Cuber, concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its catalyst, the late Charles Mingus. Dining.

Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the airy space known as the Terrace Bar, alto saxophonist **THOMAS CHAPIN** leads a quartet through Feb. 6.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—A classic jazz club—subterranean and smoky—thick with the spirits of past masters. All this week, except Feb. 7, jazz purists should check out the **LOU DONALDSON** quartet. Donaldson's credentials include a stint on alto with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

CABARETS AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—The hotel's long and narrow Oak Room may not be ideally shaped for a night club, but the singers it books are generally savvy enough to overcome the challenge. **KT SULLIVAN** hails from Boggy Depot, Oklahoma, but she's a sophisticate at the core. The soprano's chameleonic vocal style is all over the map; Barbara Cook and Cleo Laine are just two points of reference among many. Sullivan's shows usually include a generous helping of the sort of Broadway and Hollywood songs that endure longer than the musicals for which they were written. Her current program (which will run here through Feb. 26) is a tribute to the grandes dames of the silver screen. Late shows on Fridays and Saturdays are given over to Dietz and Schwartz standards. Dining.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A cool green music hall that features a steady stream of international pop and cabaret stars, as well as the occasional drag queen. The Ballroom is also a tapas restaurant—if you haven't had dinner, you may never make it to the show. Acclaimed Brazilian singer **LENY ANDRADE** is here through Feb. 5.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave., at 76th St. (744-1600) Holy eyelashes, Batman, it's **EARTHA KITT,** in for a six-week run at the Carlyle. Kitt is now in her sixties and she's still a fierce and funny performer with a feral grip on her audience. She inhabits her songs: when she sings "I Wanna Be Evil," you don't doubt for a second that she could spit tacks. . . . ¶ **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano in Bemelmans Bar, across the hall.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—Not to be confused with its richer cousin, the Rainbow Room, which is just down the hall. There you'll find expansive Art Deco glitter; here intimate nineties glitter. The performers, with their backs to the window, have to compete with a view of the Hudson, the George Washington Bridge, and beyond. American treasure **ROSEMARY CLOONEY** has begun a monthlong engagement. Closed Mondays.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—The winter season at the upstairs cabaret starts

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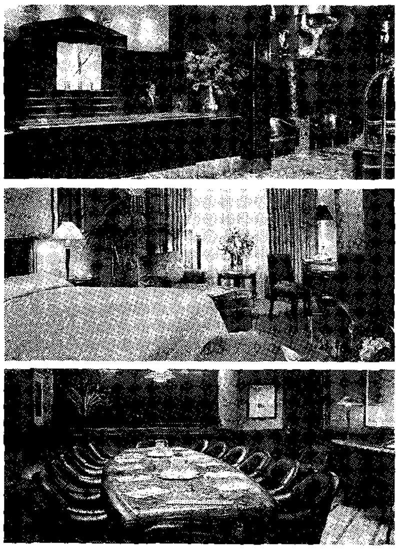

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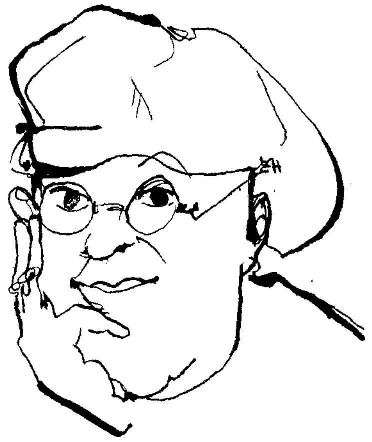
on Feb. 6, when Broadway personality **BETTY BUCKLEY** performs the first of two Sunday-evening engagements. Occasional Monday nights are given over to sessions spotlighting individual songwriters of note; the Feb. 7 installment will feature **SARA ZAHN** performing songs by Carolyn Leigh. Dining.

ROCK AND FOLK

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—This week, the club continues its twentieth-anniversary celebration, which will run through early April. On Feb. 2, Vin Scelsa presents an edition of his series "In Their Own Words: A Bunch of Songwriters Sittin' Around Singing," with **LOU REED, SUZANNE VEGA, KRIS KRISTOFFERSON,** and **VICTORIA WILLIAMS**—all of them, one hopes, in schmooze-and-tell mode. **JANE SIBERRY** arrives on Feb. 3, with **SHAWN COLVIN** and **VICTORIA WILLIAMS.** This fantastic triple bill, featuring perhaps the finest collection of female songwriting talent in recent memory, is a must-see. On Feb. 4-6: a fiftieth-birthday bash for multi-instrumentalist **AL KOOPER.** Known for his work on several classic Bob Dylan albums and for founding Blood, Sweat and Tears, Kooper has just released a sharp new record, titled "Rekooperation." Kooper's three-night celebration will feature a carload of special guests, including moonlighting writer Stephen King (on guitar for the weekend shows). **BARENAKED LADIES** arrives on Feb. 7, followed by **CRASH TEST DUMMIES** on Feb. 8.



VIN SCELSA *stands apart from the classic-rock blight of "more music" (all numbingly familiar) and "less talk" (about nothing at all). On his Sunday-evening show on WXRK-FM (92.3), the d.j. offers stream-of-consciousness soliloquies—on politics, books, films, the weather—and plays great new music. His talent-scout instincts and unerring good taste more than make up for his sometimes marathon loquaciousness. As the regular host of the Bottom Line's superb "In Their Own Words" series, he lets brilliant songwriters hog the mike as they discuss their craft and demonstrate their wares. Kris Kristofferson, Lou Reed, Victoria Williams, and Suzanne Vega will join him on February 2.*

LIZZIE HOLLEY

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—Don't be misled by the sleepy, hole-in-the-wall atmosphere of this bohemian Irish café, or by the fact that the place has no stage. While patrons have been writing in journals, rolling cigarettes, or lingering over their Rolling Rocks, some pretty fine musicians have turned up and tuned up: Sinéad O'Connor, Marianne Faithfull, and Luka Bloom, to name a heady few. On Feb. 6, catch **THE IMMIGRANT PICKERS,** a group that lends eccentric instrumental flourishes to its hearty folk-rock. Illinois-based singer-songwriter **TOM CLARK** fronts a country-style band on Feb. 8.

Grand, 76 E. 13th St. (777-0600)—A serious room for serious rock-and-rolling. On Feb. 8: **D-GENERATION,** with guests Fur, New York Loose, and d.j. Jimmy Gestapo.

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—**KOKO TAYLOR** stops by on Feb. 5. Taylor's forte is urban blues, delivered with her big, rumbling alto. After singing in her church choir as a teen, Taylor got her professional start in Chicago, where she performed with Buddy Guy and Junior Wells, then landed her own record contract in the early sixties. Her latest album, "Force of Nature," finds the singer—now in her late fifties—still in strong, supple voice. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—A church turned eighties hot spot, this unholy venue currently plays host to a variety of techno and alternative acts. On Feb. 8: **THE OBSESSED** arrive. The Obsessed have been cranking out angst-ridden hard rock since the early eighties, but the band only recently scored a major-label contract. (Its first album, "The Church Within," is due in early March.) Perhaps it was lead singer Scott (Wino) Weinrich's penchant for Eddie Vedderesque melodrama that did the trick.

Ludlow Street Café, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—Up until a few years ago, this stretch of the Lower East Side was only for the bold. But now that the artists have moved in, you have to go to Williamsburg if you want to get any more bohemian. The Ludlow Street Café, which was one of the first places to stake a claim on the new frontier, is an unassuming basement restaurant-bar, where you can eat cheap, drink cheap, and catch live music nightly. Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Many of the bands that play here today will be playing somewhere more expensive tomorrow. On Feb. 4, the bands **BAILTERSPACE** and **GOD IS MY CO-PILOT** are featured.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and, occasionally, bossa nova. On Feb. 6, the club will observe the birthday of the late great Bob Marley. **ANTHEM** will perform, and WBAI's Midnight Ravers will spin dreadlock disks. Also scheduled to appear is musicologist Roger Steffens, who will present a video tribute to the reggae king. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—A broad, spacious, and agreeable club, near what was once called Ladies' Mile but might now be termed the pool-hall district. The pillared, loftlike room is decorated in a hodgepodge, vaguely Bourbon Street manner, and sight lines are above average. **ELEANOR MC EVOY,** a fresh and lyrical new voice in folk-rock, arrives on Feb. 8.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—With psychedelic graffiti adorning the walls and peace-espousing, environmentally correct literature displayed near the door, it's little wonder that this cavernous dive has lured Deadheads and bands that share the Dead's penchant for endless jamming. **TOMMY KEENE** stops by on Feb. 2. A reedy-voiced singer-songwriter, Keene has shown steady improvement since his endearing but lightweight 1982 début album, "Strange Alliance." His guests will be Melting Hopefuls and Foggy Notion.

ART

Out of the Dark

The painter Arshile Gorky's life was in many respects one of exemplary torment. Born in Turkish Armenia, he endured bitter persecution at the hands of the Ottoman Turks. His mother died of starvation, and Gorky and his sister journeyed as refugees to an unknown America in 1920, joining their father and another sister in Providence, Rhode Island. Plagued by sickness and disaster all his life, Gorky hanged himself in July of 1948. But in spite of a life of exile and deprivation, in his art Gorky shows no trace of the often blustery, noisy traffic in angst indulged in by some of his American contemporaries.

The late paintings assembled at Gagosian (980 Madison Avenue, at 77th Street; through March 5) are works of extraordinary beauty. Gorky's finest works depend on the tension between his spindly yet graceful line and bold washes of incandescent color, formally dramatizing the emotional tenor of his paintings; rushes of pure feeling are subdued by an unerring pictorial elegance. This visual tact is behind Gorky's greatest paintings. For instance, in "Nude" (1946), with its puffs of smoky black against a white ground, the discreet daubs of red and yellow are more like tokens of seductive modesty than of freely indulged sensual pleasure. Gorky makes a similar use of subtle intensity in "Delicate Game" (also from 1946), a stark composition punctuated by a widening rivulet of pure red, like blood from a wound. His agony was always exquisite, carrying with it a whiff of the jaded salons of a lost European culture.

MUSEUMS

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—Visitors can now walk into the first chamber of the Temple of Dendur. . . . ¶ "Degas Landscapes" features seventy-five paintings, pastels, and monotypes that reveal a lesser-known side of Degas's œuvre: the great outdoors. The exhibit includes a tremendous range of styles and natural vistas, from early Italian countrysides to mature, deftly rendered French seascapes. Many of the images are on view for the first time since a solo Degas show in 1892. . . . ¶ "Illustrated Poetry and Epic Images: Persian Painting of the 1330s and 1340s." . . . ¶ An exhibition of sixteenth-century Italian drawings, with work by Caravaggio, Fra Bartolommeo, Bronzino, and many others. . . . ¶ "Recent Work," a mini-retrospective of more than fifty portraits by Lucian Freud. . . . ¶ The New Costume Institute celebrates five decades of the work of Diana Vreeland. . . . ¶ "The Gold of Meroe" features the jewelry of Queen Amanishakheto of Meroe, an ancient Nubian ruler. . . . ¶ "Elephant: The Animal and Its Ivory in African Art" includes seventy objects, from elephant masks to intricately carved tusks, representing more than twenty different indigenous cultures. . . . ¶ "Immortals and Sages: Fusuma Paintings from Ryoan-ji and the Lore of China in Japanese Art." (Open

Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Three Masters of the Bauhaus: Lyonel Feininger, Wassily Kandinsky, and Paul Klee" comprises roughly seventy-five prints and illustrated books from the museum's collection. . . . ¶ Twenty-five years of Brooke Alexander Editions. . . . ¶ "Designed for Speed: Three Automobiles by Ferrari," MOMA's first automobile exhibition in more than fifteen years. . . .¶ "Projects: Sarah Lucas and Steven Pippin" showcases the work of two young British artists who use such objects as false teeth and razor blades in their installations. Through Feb. 8. . . . ¶ "Gesture and Pose: Twentieth-Century Photographs from the Collection." (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem." A retrospective of Morris's minimalist and conceptual sculptures, drawings, and performance films. In conjunction with the artist's show at the Guggenheim SoHo. Starts Feb. 4. (Open Feb. 2, from 10 to 8. New hours as of Feb. 4: Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—"Robert Morris: The Mind/Body Problem." Nine installations with mirrors. . . . ¶ Eighty watercolors, made between 1911 and 1944, by the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), whose art has been so well assimilated into the mainstream that it feels like a kind of modernism lite. The earlier works, with their nervous, liquescent, quasi-figurative shapes, represent Kandinsky's art at its strongest. . . . ¶ "Industrial Elegance," a lobby exhibition, salutes design excellence in everyday objects, from ice-cube makers to Frisbees. Through March 6. (Open Feb. 2, from 11 to 6, and Feb. 3, from 11 to 10. New hours as of Feb. 4: Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—More than a hundred and sixty paintings, sculptures, drawings, and site-specific installations by Mike Kelley. Through Feb. 20. . . . ¶ A dual exhibition of work by photographers Walker Evans (1903-1975) and Dan Graham (born 1942). Both are heavy on urban and suburban drear: tract housing, diners, billboards, and the landscape of commerce are the recurrent motifs. Graham's videos are also on view. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

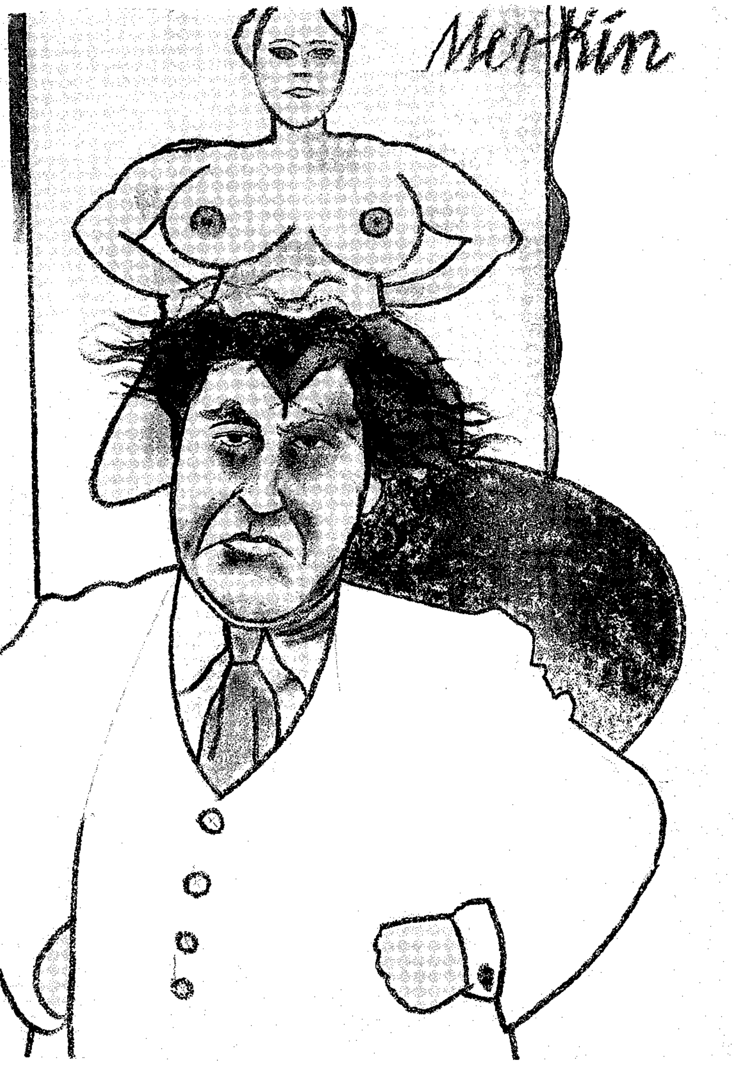
American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Sharks! Fact and Fantasy," includes a walk-through diorama with life-size models of seventeen species of shark. Opens Feb. 4. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—An exhibition of more than five hundred Egyptian objects from the museum's extensive collection, spanning thirteen hundred years of Pharaonic history. . . . ¶ Photographs by Consuelo Kanaga (1894-1978) who started out as a photojournalist for the San Francisco *Chronicle* and evolved into a portraitist of the first water. Through Feb. 22. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

China Institute, 125 E. 65th St.—"Sending Away the Old, Welcoming the New: Celebrating Chinese New Year." Traditional costumes, toys, and ritual and household objects, dating from the Han dynasty (209 B.C.-220 A.D.) to the present. Through March 5. (Open Mondays through Saturdays, 10 to 5, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Packaging the New: Design and the American Consumer 1925-1975." Opens Feb. 8. . . . ¶ "Fancy Fronts: Men's Waistcoats from the Eighteenth Century." Through Feb. 13. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

RICHARD MERKIN



Gaston Lachaise at Salander-O'Reilly.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St.—"Modern Japanese Ceramics in American Collections" includes a hundred and twenty works, created by ninety-five artists between 1935 and 1991. Through Feb. 6. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"A Postcolonial Kinderhood." A bedroom installation by Elaine Reichek, featuring twelve samplers embroidered with quotations about Jewish identity. Opens Feb. 6. . . . ¶ "Four Contemporary Works," by Aharon Gluska, Vivienne Koorland, Robert Wilson, and Joe Zucker. Opens Feb. 6. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Gutenberg and the Genesis of Printing." At the center of this exhibit are the Library's three Gutenberg Bibles (the single largest collection in the world) and a replica of the press on which they were printed. The show, which documents the rapid spread of the printed word, includes copies of the first books printed in several European countries, the first printed Hebrew Bible, and a section on William Caxton, Chaucer's publisher, who first printed "The Canterbury Tales." On Saturdays and Sundays at 1, there are demonstrations on the press. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum for African Art, 593 Broadway—"Fusion: West African Artists at the Venice Biennale." An exhibit of recent paintings, sculptures, and drawings by Mor Faye and Moustapha Dime, of Senegal, and Tamessir Dia, Ouattara, and Gerard Santoni, of the Ivory Coast. Opens Feb. 5. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5:30; Saturdays, noon to 8; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Revisiting Ammi Phillips: Fifty Years of American Portraiture." A retrospective that includes fifty paintings by Phillips (1788-1865). Opens Feb. 5. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Bad Girls." Bars of soap inscribed with brazen potty talk, poster-size color photos of Homer Simpson and Princess Jasmine (of "Aladdin") wearing turbans that are actually someone's testicles, a Topless Hall of Fame, and photos of men in dresses are among this hodgepodge collection of "naughty" art. If Portia Munson's "Pink Project"—an abject shrine to womanhood built from hundreds of sickly-pink plastic objects—doesn't get to you, Carrie Mae Weems's "Bride" will: the bride in a typically cloying wedding portrait has her mouth taped shut. Through Feb. 27. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, and Sundays, noon to 6; Saturdays, noon to 8.)

Schomburg Center, 515 Lenox Ave., at 135th St.—"African Zion: The Sacred Art of Ethiopia." With a focus on Christian art of Ethiopia, the show includes icons, illuminated manuscripts, and coins from the fourth to the eighteenth centuries. (Open Mondays through Wednesdays, noon to 8; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following listings lead off with new shows.)

Elaine de Kooning (1920-89)—Paintings, watercolors, and works on paper, all of the statue of Bacchus in the Luxembourg Gardens, which the artist saw in 1976. Opens Feb. 5. Through Feb. 26. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

John Gibson—Small paintings of single spheres and large paintings of complex configurations of spheres. Opens Feb. 5. Through March 12. (Perspective, 19 E. 71st St. Open Mondays.)

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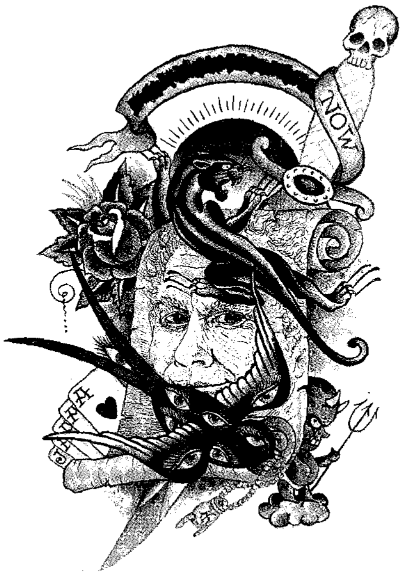
Adolph Gottlieb (1903-1974)—A historical show of oil paintings by an important but lesser-known first-generation Abstract Expressionist, tracing the emergence of his own distinctive style. Gottlieb's paintings of the forties and fifties recall early works by Rothko and Pollock, as he shared their predilection for Surrealist-inspired imagery and portentous, "mythic" titles. By the mid-fifties, he'd settled on his signature style: the hyperdramatic image of the "burst," an explosion of densely clotted paint, as in the tempestuous "Black, Blue, Red" (1956) and the sombre "Ascent" (1958). Through Feb. 8. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)



Self-portrait by D. E. Hardy (Thorp).

Gaston Lachaise (1882-1935)—Monumental cast-bronze male and female nudes by a French-American sculptor who worked in the grand manner that began with Egyptian and Greco-Roman art and continued with Rodin and Maillol. Lachaise's fondness for bulbous or fragmentary forms, tokens of modernist distortion, belies his essential conservatism. Through Feb. 26. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St. Open Mondays.)

"The Forgotten Folk Art of the 1940s"—This exhibition aims to provide a historical context for the outsider art that is all the rage. On view are paintings by Morris Hirshfield (1872-1946), who was accorded a retrospective at MOMA in 1943. "The Coquette," which stops you in your tracks, reveals the artist's happy abandonment of reality for a masterly investigation of design and color: the ill-proportioned, baby-blue-gowned figure, standing beside an incongruous dollhouse-size table, glances deadpan over a bare shoulder at the viewer. "General Sibiey's Home in State of Mennesota" and "Waterfall, White Mountains, N.H.," by Israel Litwak (1868-1960), who had a one-man show at the Brooklyn Museum as early as 1939, have something of Henri Rousseau's landscapes about them. And no show of forties folk art would be complete without the requisite Anna Mary Robertson (1860-1961), later known as Grandma Moses, who was first introduced to the art world by Sidney Janis in 1939; she is represented by seven paintings, which look rather sugary in comparison with the above. Through March 19. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St.)

Alan Feltus—Enigmatic paintings of figures in interiors, incorporating postcards of Old Master paintings, by an American artist who lives in Umbria. Through March 5. (Forum, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Morris Graves and Mark Tobey (1890-1976)—Twenty-two paintings, dating from the forties to the seventies, underscoring the shared origins and objectives of these two visionary artists of the Northwest. Through Feb. 28. (Schmidt Bingham, 41 E. 57th St.)

Cynthia Knott / Mary Frank—"Horizons," a series of paintings in a Turneresque mode, which have a metallic sheen unbefitting their subject and some unfortunate titles, like "Ah Botticelli" and "Vespers." / Four bronzes of fragmented faces or figures, plus related drawings. Through Feb. 26. (Midtown Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Jac Leirner—Sculptures by a young Brazilian conceptual artist, whose collection of discarded material—cigarette packs, airsick bags, and so forth—is the basis of her work. Through Feb. 19. (Galerie Lelong, 20 W. 57th St.)

Dorothea Rockburne—Four new paintings in Lascaux acrylic applied directly on the gallery walls in a style reminiscent of fresco secco. Rockburne remains a resolutely high-minded abstractionist, but a strain of Jetsons-style futurism keeps her work lively. Through Feb. 26. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Myron Stout (1908-87)—Abstractions in color, from 1950 and 1951, predating the black-and-white paintings for which he is best known. Through March 12. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

"Intimate Observation"—A show spanning two centuries of American still-life painting, from traditional renderings by Raphaelle Peale to modern interpretations by Ralston Crawford. Through Feb. 26. (Hirschl & Adler, 21 E. 70th St.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Lynda Benglis—Abstract, brilliant-colored wax and encaustic paintings on Masonite or cast plaster. Opens Feb. 4. Through Feb. 26. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St. Open Mondays.)

Jackie Ferrara—Wooden architectural models for swimming-pool complexes, mounted on tables or shelves. Opens Feb. 5. Through March 19. (Klein, 594 Broadway.)

Ellen Kozak—Lyrical landscapes. Opens Feb. 3. Through March 8. (Roy, 46 Greene St.)

Stephen Mueller—Mystical abstract paintings with biomorphic forms and translucent colors. Opens Feb. 5. Through March 3. (Nosei, 100 Prince St.)

Robert Zakanitch—"The Big Bungalow Suite," a group of four paintings, each depicting an enormous curtain of floral imagery with an inset window giving onto a country landscape or waterfall. Opens Feb. 5. Through March 31. (McCoy, 129 Greene St.) . . . **note:** Paintings from 1991 to the present are showing concurrently at McCoy, 41 E. 57th St., from Feb. 3 to March 12.

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Michele Auder—"Voyage to the Center of the Phone Lines," a new video installation by a veteran of the form, alludes to Jules Verne's "Journey to the Center of the Earth" and retains the proto-sci-fi novel's intimations of adventure and peril. What we see in the gallery's darkened, living-room-like theatre are images of blue skies, beach grasses, and ordinary household interiors; what we hear is a wheezing interpolation of anonymous but distinctly suburban-sounding voices: men betting on sports, shreds of gossip, unromantic lovers giggling and squabbling. The disjunction between the banality of the conversations and the serene emptiness of Auder's images is subtly menacing. A retrospective of Auder's earlier video work includes "A Coupla White Faggots Sitting Around Talking," from a screenplay by novelist and playwright Gary Indiana, in which Indiana, Taylor Mead, Jackie Curtis, Cookie Mueller, and various other fixtures of Manhattan's demimonde enact a series of scabrous and hilarious vignettes, making this a worthy Mudd Club-era successor to Warhol's epochal "The Chelsea Girls." Through Feb. 12. (Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St.)

Hannah Wilke (1940-93)—An intensely moving tribute to the artist, who died last year of cancer. Throughout her career, Wilke used her body as a conceptualist canvas for powerful feminist statements. It must have seemed perfectly logical to use it one last time, as it was ravaged by disease. Many of the supergloss prints (her husband helped her take them) show only her face, with its knowing bloodshot eyes; images that show her whole body are overwhelmingly, almost painfully graphic. Wilke incorporated her sickness into her art, arranging hair that had fallen out onto thick white paper to Rorschach-like effect, placing stained bandages from a bone-marrow harvest under Plexiglas, putting silvery radiation neck blocks on a pedestal. The results are surreal but without humor. By documenting her sickness in this way, Wilke reclaimed it—powerfully and triumphantly—for herself and for her art. Two watercolor series—one of her face and one of her hands—are multicolored and beautiful. Through Feb. 19. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

Ed Baynard—New works (after a lengthy hiatus), consisting of lines and splatters of paint done in the Oriental tradition of the calligraphic gesture; also drawings. Through March 5. (Anderson, 476 Broome St.)

Keith Coventry—A British artist who paints in both a Suprematist and a minimalist style. Through Feb. 19. (Marcus, 578 Broadway.)

John Currin—New paintings of men alone and with women. Through Feb. 26. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

Don Eddy—Paintings, mostly triptychs, concerned with light in landscape and water—a far cry from the artist's early realist subjects (cars and bumpers). Through March 2. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Ava Gerber / Laura Ford—Sculptures of found objects. / Two sculptures of young girls with heads made of flowers. Through Feb. 19. (Freire, 130 Prince St.)

Mike Glier—Ten paintings from the series "Garden Court," combining nature studies with subtle references to a violent world. Through March 5. (Baer, 476 Broome St.)

D. E. Hardy / Purvis Young—Watercolors and etchings with traditional American tattoo motifs, by a practicing tattoo artist. / A self-taught artist who lives in the black Miami ghetto of Overtown, Young subtly reveals in his paintings a concern for the plight of the underprivileged. Through Feb. 19. (Thorp, 103 Prince St.)

Oliver Herring—A young German artist's series of coat sculptures, dedicated to Ethyl Eichelberger, an artist and female impersonator who had AIDS and who committed suicide in 1991. Through Feb. 19. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

Minoru Kawabata—Paintings in which heavy brushstrokes slash through variegated color fields. Through Feb. 26. (Tilton, 47-49 Greene St.)

Martin Kippenberger—Fifteen paintings. Through Feb. 19. (Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St.)

Bruce Nauman—A video installation titled "Falls, Pratfalls, and Sleights of Hand." Through Feb. 19. (Castelli, 420 West Broadway.)

Ann Preston—Drawings and sculptures of infants as strange biomorphic beings, plus works suggesting pacifiers, nipples, and condoms. Through Feb. 26. (Toll, 146 Greene St.)

Ellen Rothenberg—"Partial Index," a sculptural installation relating to the Anne Frank diaries. Through Feb. 19. (Kent, 67 Prince St. Closed Mondays and Tuesdays.)

David Salle—Two exhibitions. At Boone, there are four 1983 works and two recent works. At Gagosian, there are ten new paintings from an "Early Product" series, which have underpinnings of rather tired American Pop icons, and six sculptures. (Boone, 417 West Broadway, through Feb. 26; and Gagosian, 136 Wooster St., through Feb. 19.)

Al Souza / Pat Colville—Richly colored paintings with photolike imagery. / Paintings with markings and squiggles that seem to float on an oil surface. Through Feb. 26. (Condeso-Lawler, 524 Broadway.)

James Turrell—The artist has reconfigured the gallery to create what he calls a "structure of light." Through March 5. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

Robert Wilson—"Three Rooms," an installation using earth, air, fire, and water to unify the separate spaces in the gallery, which are individually designed with lighting, sound, music, and/or text. Through Feb. 26. (Ikeda, 130 Prince St.)

"American Self-Taught"—Ken Grimes, William Hawkins, Bill Traylor, and others. Through March 5. (Ricco-Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

ANTIQUES AND AUCTIONS

The American Way—Levy (24 E. 84th St.) is holding an exhibition (through Feb. 13) devoted entirely to block-front furniture from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New York. Block-front is a finely crafted Colonial style in which a chest, desk, secretary—any piece other than a chair—is divided vertically into three panels, with a concave center and convex sides. We're talking big bucks: from $85,000 for a chest of drawers to $950,000 for a Chippendale mahogany tea table, the only other extant example of which is at the Winterthur Museum, in Delaware.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Susan Rankaitis—Photographs treated with paint, chemical washes, and other materials. Through March 12. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

Joel Sternfeld—"On This Site . . ." Sternfeld's new work is based on a semiotic question: Are neutral images transcended by significant events? But his photographs—of a locker used to store bomb materials, of the site of a well-documented murder—are certainly more compelling than any theory. Through Feb. 26. (Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

"Devotion, Faith, and Fervor: The Faithful and the Damned"—A group show inspired by mythical images of the American South, with photographs by Eudora Welty, Walker Evans, and others. Through March 5. (Gallery 292, at 120 Wooster St.)

"New Traditions"—Work by three contemporary photographers—Frederic Ohringer, Michael O'Neill, and Vernon Miller—who use low-tech or outmoded equipment to create lushly textured images. Through Feb. 26. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

"Photographs Beyond Description"—A group show including work by Arbus, Eggleston, Frank, Stieglitz, and others. Through Feb. 12. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—More than a hundred images by Robert Smithson (1938-73). Through Feb. 13. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Cycles," four decades of photography by Judy Dater. . . . ¶ "Iterations: The New Image," an exhibition of computer-generated photography. Through Feb. 6. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

Supersingers

When he's in form, tenor Anthony Rolfe Johnson is one of our era's supreme singers. He didn't begin studying singing until he was twenty-nine, but he soon garnered attention as a member of The Songmakers' Almanac (the radically imaginative British singing group), and then as a recording star with a sterling voice and an affinity for historical performance. He's superb in Monteverdi, Mozart, and Britten, and peerless in Handel (his recorded "Jephtha," "Solomon," and "Acis and Galatea" will not soon be superseded). But vocal problems have plagued him; they were probably responsible for the postponement of his Metropolitan Opera début from 1988 (as Pelléas) to 1991 (when he sang four Idomeneos). Since then, New York has seen him only as Cassio in the Chicago Symphony's 1991 concert version of Verdi's "Otello" and as Monteverdi's Ulisse in a production the Netherlands Opera brought to Brooklyn last June, neither of which showed him at his best. He is rumored to be in fine voice going into the Met's new production of Britten's "Death in Venice" (opening on February 7), which means a memorable operatic experience may lie in store.

The other Met—the Metropolitan Museum—also promises singing to warm the hearts of connoisseurs, hosting the Austrian baritone Wolfgang Holzmair in a performance of "Die Schöne Müllerin" on February 4. Schubert's cycle inevitably calls to mind the late Fritz Wunderlich, whom Holzmair recalls in his wide-eyed, vivid, unencumbered interpretations. The baritone's New York début (last season, at the Frick) proved that he had entered the ranks of great lieder singers; "Die Schöne Müllerin" should show his subtle skills to advantage.

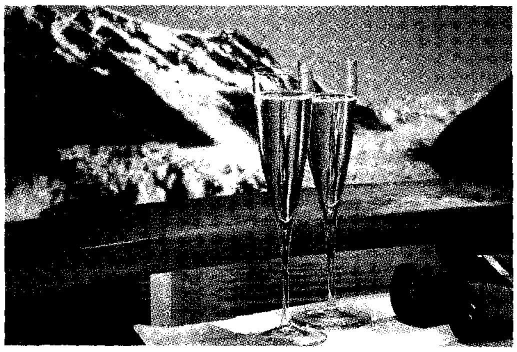
(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; and for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**aida,** with Sharon Sweet, Dolora Zajick, Michael Sylvester, and Juan Pons; conducted by John Fiore. (Feb. 2 at 8 and Feb. 5 at 1:30.) . . . With Fabio Armiliato as Radamès. (Feb. 8 at 8.) . . . **le nozze di figaro,** with Helen Donath, Ruth Ann Swenson, Susan Quittmeyer, Dwayne Croft, and James Morris; Julius Rudel. (Feb. 3 and Feb. 5 at 8.) . . . **lucia di lammermoor,** with Mariella Devia, Taro Ichihara, Juan Pons, and Jeffrey Wells; Nello Santi. (Feb. 4 at 8.) . . . **death in venice,** the opening performance of a new production of Britten's opera, with Anthony Rolfe Johnson and Thomas Allen; David Atherton. (Feb. 7 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

"Karna"—A Javanese-style shadow-puppet opera with a plot drawn from the Mahabharata; the libretto and newly composed

SAGAFJORD'S ALASKA CRUISES



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CUNARD

44B

LISTENING BOOTH

Spohr: Octet; Sextet; Quintet. L'Archibudelli and the Smithsonian Chamber Players. (Sony Classical). Mention the music that came out of Vienna in the second decade of the nineteenth century, and most listeners will think first of Beethoven (and of masterpieces like those presented this week by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center). But gifted composers abounded, and their works provide a context to help measure Beethoven's achievements. Louis Spohr's G-Major Quintet, for example, was considered by some critics to rival Beethoven's best compositions. Better still are Spohr's later, Mendelssohnian Sextet and his sumptuous Octet. All are performed magnificently in this collaboration between two leading historical-performance groups, playing on a dream-come-true ensemble of eight Stradivari instruments.

score (based on classical Javanese and Western musical styles) are by Barbara Benary, who directs members of the New York-based Gamelan Son of Lion. (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Feb. 3-6 at 7:30. Through Feb. 13.)

Wagner in Concert—Wolfgang Sawallisch conducts the Philadelphia Orchestra in a concert performance (with supertitles) of Act I of "Die Walküre" and excerpts from "Tannhäuser"; with soprano Deborah Voigt, tenor Heikki Siukoli, bass René Pape, and the Philadelphia Singers Chorale. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 8 at 8.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Kurt Masur conducts a pair of "battle symphonies": Beethoven's notorious "Wellington's Victory or the Battle of Victoria" and Shostakovich's Symphony No. 7 (the "Leningrad"). (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 3 and Feb. 5 at 8, Feb. 4 at 11 A.M., and Feb. 8 at 7:30.)

Moscow Virtuosi—Vladimir Spivakov conducts Haydn's C-Major Cello Concerto (with Wendy Warner), Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony No. 2 (arranged from his Third String Quartet), Haydn's C-Major Violin Concerto (with the conductor doubling as soloist), and Bartók's Divertimento. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 2 at 8.)

Mexican Music Festival—Concluding concerts of a weeklong showcase of Mexican music and performers. Feb. 2 at 8: Recorder player Horacio Franco performs music written for him by Daniel Catán, Mario Lavista, Ana Lara, and others. (Americas Society, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. 249-8950.) . . . ¶ Feb. 3 at 8: The American Composers Orchestra Chamber Ensemble, directed by Paul Lustig Dunkel and Tania León, plays music by Conlon Nancarrow (an American living in Mexico) and three Mexicans living in New York: Max Lifchitz, Alida Vasquez, and Samuel Zyman. In addition, soprano Rachel Rosales and pianist Dennis Russell Davies will perform songs by Carlos Chávez and Mr. Zyman, and the ensemble will play works by Victor Rasgado, Javier Alvarez, and Ana Lara. (Weill Recital Hall.) . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 3: Dennis Russell Davies conducts the American Composers Orchestra in Silvestre Revueltas's 1939 film score "La Noche de los Mayas" as well as the United States premières of works by Federico Ibarra, Mario Lavista, and Marcela Rodríguez (her Concerto for Recorders and Orchestra, featuring Horacio Franco). (Carnegie Hall.)

Israel Philharmonic Orchestra—Zubin Mehta conducts Pavel Haas's "Studie for String Orchestra," Sibelius's Violin Concerto (with Itzhak Perlman), and Brahms' Symphony No. 2. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 3 at 7.)

Dresden Philharmonie—Philippe Entremont conducts Brahms' "Academic Festival Overture," Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 2, and Beethoven's Triple Concerto (featuring violinist Cho-Liang Lin, cellist Carter Brey, and Mr. Entremont as pianist). (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 4 at 8.)

Orpheus—The conductorless chamber orchestra performs Boccherini's "La Casa del Diavolo" symphony, Mozart's Piano Concerto in B-Flat (K. 456, with Radu Lupu), Berg's "Lyric Suite," and Dvořák's Serenade for Winds. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 5 at 8.)

Choral Symphony Society Cantata Singers—David Labovitz directs the chamber choir and orchestra in Bach's Cantatas No. 23 and No. 177, as well as Haydn's "Creation" Mass. (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Feb. 6 at 2. Tickets at the door on the day of the concert.)

Greenwich Village Orchestra—Robert Grehan conducts Berlioz' "Le Corsaire" Overture, the première of Irwin Bazelon's "Entre Nous" (featuring cellist Dorothy Lawson), and Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 2. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Feb. 6 at 3. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

Canterbury Choral Society—Charles Dodsley Walker directs Randall Thompson's "The Peaceable Kingdom," Mozart's motet "Exsultate, Jubilate" (with soprano Jennifer Barron), and numerous Alleluia settings. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Feb. 6 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

National Symphony Orchestra—In his final season as the orchestra's music director, Mstislav Rostropovich conducts Beethoven's Third "Leonore" Overture and Third Piano Concerto (featuring Eugene Istomin), as well as the New York première of Schnittke's Symphony No. 6. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 6 at 8.)

Minnesota Orchestra—Edo de Waart conducts a Gabrieli sonata, Rachmaninoff's Symphony No. 3, and Beethoven's Violin Concerto (with Vadim Repin). (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 7 at 8.)

RECITALS

Bachathon—Organist Anthony Newman will perform a huge program: all of Bach's preludes, toccatas, and fantasies with their respective fugues (plus a passacaglia)—apparently very quickly, in order to fit them all in—on a historic Aeolian-Skinner instrument with more than twelve thousand pipes. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. 751-1616, ext. 226. Feb. 2, from 8 until midnight, with a stretching of the legs at 10.)

Alexander Paley—Pianist, performing Liszt's "Twelve Transcendental Études," Schumann's "Carnaval," Shostakovich's Piano Sonata No. 1, and Bach's A-Minor Aria Variata (BWV 989). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Feb. 3 at 8.)

Wolfgang Holzmair—The baritone performs Schubert's "Die Schöne Müllerin"; with pianist Thomas Palm. (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 4 at 8.)

ROXANA BIKADOROF

Victor Ledbetter—Baritone, in a recital of songs by Schubert, Guy Ropartz, Ravel, Mussorgsky, Szymanowski, and Ives; with pianist David Triestram. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 4 at 8.)

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center—Presenting three Beethoven works published all in a row, in 1816 (though written several years earlier): his F-Minor String Quartet (Op. 95), G-Major Violin Sonata (Op. 96), and "Archduke" Piano Trio (Op. 97). (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 4 at 8 and Feb. 6 at 5.)

Guarneri Quartet—Performing string quartets by Beethoven (Op. 18, No. 4) and Grieg (Op. 27), as well as Dvořák's Quintet in E-Flat (Op. 97, with violist Steven Tenenbom assisting). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Feb. 5 at 8.)

Yale Music Spectrum—Russian songs and chamber music by Prokofiev, Mussorgsky, Stravinsky, Shostakovich, and Schnittke. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 5 at 8.)

Lafayette String Quartet—Performing Borodin's Quartet No. 2, Stravinsky's "Three Pieces," and Shostakovich's Quartet No. 3. (Washington Irving High School, Irving Pl. at 16th St. Feb. 5 at 8. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.) . . . ¶ Performing quartets by Haydn (Op. 55, No. 3), Beethoven (Op. 18, No. 6), and Borodin (his Second). (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5689. Feb. 6 at 2.)

Bach in the Morning—A selection of the composer's trio sonatas, played by violinist Eric Grossman, harpsichordist Ilan Rechtman, and cellist Iris Regev. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. Feb. 6 at 11 A.M. Admission is free, but call 1-718 885-2478 to reserve a seat.)

Florence Gould Hall Chamber Players—Performing music by George Onslow, Henri Marteau (his "Quintet with Clarinet," featuring clarinettist Michel Lethiec), Martinů, and Offenbach. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Feb. 6 at 3.)

Daniel Gaisford—Cellist, performing sonatas by Debussy, Prokofiev, Barber, and Rachmaninoff; with pianist Nelson Padgett. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100. Feb. 6 at 3.)

Si-Yo Chamber Music Society—John Ferrillo is the featured oboist in Mozart's Oboe Quartet and Nielsen's "Fantasy Pieces"; Brahms' A-Major Piano Quartet completes the program. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 6 at 3.)

James Barbagallo and Tanya Stambuk—Performing works for piano four-hands, by Poulenc, Barber, Brahms, and others. (Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church, 85 S. Oxford St., Brooklyn. Feb. 6 at 3. For information about tickets, call 1-718 855-3053.)

All Seasons Chamber Players—Presenting trios by Haydn and Schubert (in E-Flat Major) as well as pieces by Griffes and Stravinsky. (Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, Madison Ave. at 73rd St. Feb. 6 at 4. Admission by contribution.)

Ex Umbris—An early-music group, performing works from Elizabethan England. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Feb. 6 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

New Millennium Ensemble—Performing works by Babbitt, Martino, Cowell, Carter, Robert Morris, and Steven Mackey. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 6 at 8:30.)

Robert Taub—The pianist performs Bach's Partita No. 2, Babbitt's "Reflections for Piano and Synthesized Tape," Scriabin's Four Preludes (Op. 22) and Sonata No. 7 (the "White Mass"), and Brahms' "Variations on a Theme by Paganini." (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. Feb. 7 at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 875-5050.)

St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble—Performing a quintet by Jean Françaix, a new trio by Jeffery Cotton, and Schubert's C-Major String Quintet. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 8 at 8.)

Consortium Players—Performing Copland's Sextet, Schoenberg's Serenade, and a work by John Gibson. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. Feb. 8 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Tilt—Fiorello LaGuardia wanted to ban it, because it promoted moral degeneracy. And we all know about that deaf, dumb, and blind kid. At the Professional and Amateur Pinball Association's "Flippermania," novice tilters can play unlimited pinball, rub elbows with the cast of "The Who's Tommy," and pick up tips from the finalists of the P.A.P.A. championship, where winners tally more points in an hour than most of us accrue in a lifetime. (Park Central Hotel, Grand Ballroom, Seventh Ave. at 55th St. Feb. 6, from 6 to 11. For more information, call 978-0208.)

If You Want to Run with the Big Dogs—Get off the porch and get ready for the Year of the Dog. Here are a few events to prepare for the Chinese Lunar Year 4692 (which begins at midnight on Feb. 10). Feb. 5, from 10 to 5: The China Institute will present a lion dance, a Chinese New Year exhibit, and, in the afternoon, free classes in cooking, language, and painting. (125 E. 65th St. 744-8181.) . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 11: Adventure on a Shoestring will lead a stroll around Chinatown and take in, among other things, a Buddhist temple and a Chinese bakery. For more information, call 265-2663. . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 2: The Brooklyn Historical Society will offer calligraphy demonstrations, Chinese storytelling, and a martial-arts performance. (128 Pierrepont St. Tickets at the door on the day of the event.)

Black History Month—The Studio Museum kicks off its Black History Month film series with "Fundi: The Story of Ella Baker." (Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St. Feb. 5 at noon. No charge beyond museum admission.) . . . ¶ The Fifth Annual National African-American Read-In. Participants bring a book by an African-American author and read silently for an hour. Afterward, guest authors will read aloud. (Schomburg Center, 515 Lenox Ave., at 135th St. Feb. 6 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

Dark Shadows—A symposium titled "Evil: The Cosmic Shadow" will help you get in touch with your evil twin. Drama, dance, and music from Africa, Asia, Europe, and America will offer interpretations of various cultural responses to evil. Lectures include "Demons in Medieval Japan" and "Shamanism: Spirits of Darkness." Margaret Mead's film "Trance and Dance in Bali" will be screened. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Feb. 5, from 8:30 to 7. To register, call 663-0142.)

Just Folks—As part of the "Celebrate Folk" festival, the Museum of American Folk Art has brought quilts, tinware, and carved wooden sculpture to the World Financial Center's Courtyard Gallery. (Mondays through Fridays, from 11 to 6, and Saturdays and Sundays, from noon to 5. Through March 6.) There will be a quilt-making class on Feb. 5, from 10 to 4 (to register, call 977-7170), and a free lecture titled "Twentieth-Century Folk Expression" on Feb. 8 at 12:30. (Activity Room, 2 World Financial Center, 225 Liberty St.)

Readings—Feb. 2 at 6:30: Jane Cooper and Jean Valentine will read from their own poetry. (City University Graduate Center, Room 207, 33 W. 42nd St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 7:30: The Manhattan Theatre Club kicks off its annual "Writers in Performance" series with dramatic readings from Mary Gordon's "The Rest of Life." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 645-5848.) . . . ¶ Feb. 7 at 8: Poets Eavan Boland and Andrew Motion will read from their own work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 7: As part of the Poetry Society of America's "Festival of New Poets," Maurice Kilwein Guevara and Susan Wheeler, among others, will read from their own work. (15 Gramercy Park S. Tickets at the door on the evening of the reading.) . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 7:30: Robert Creeley and Allen Ginsberg will read from their own poetry. (Dia Center for the Arts, 155 Mercer St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Talks—Feb. 3 at 6:15: Sculptor Judy Pfaff will talk about her work. (Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison at 75th St. Tickets at the door on the evening of the talk.) . . . ¶ Feb. 8 at 8: Maureen Howard, Rosemary Mahoney, Thomas Mallon, and Bill O'Sullivan will talk about Irish-American writers, and will read from their own work. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the discussion.)

Walks & Tours—Feb. 5 at 1: The Municipal Art Society is offering a tour of the Seventh Regiment Armory, which was built as a clubhouse for the upper crust. For more information, call 935-3960. . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 1: The Lower East Side Tenement Museum will offer its "Streets Where We Lived" tour. For more information, call 387-0341.

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

Jazzy—Does your young hepcat dig Monk, swoon over Ellington, bop to Bird? Check out the Children's Museum of Manhattan jazz-appreciation workshop, which will incorporate storytelling, rhythm games, vocalizing, and movement. Recommended ages: three and older. (212 W. 83rd St. 721-1234. Feb. 5 at 11:30 and 2 and Feb. 6 at 11:30.)

"Young Abe Lincoln"—An hour-long musical by John Allen and Jeff Lodin, which deals with Lincoln's early career in New Salem, Illinois. Presented by Theatreworks/USA. Recommended ages: eight and older. (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 677-5959. Feb. 6 and Feb. 12-13 at 12:30.)

Wave Hill Weekend—Spend some time at the Riverdale garden, sketching cacti in the greenhouse. Environmental artist Noah Baen will provide tips. (Independence Ave. at W. 249th St. 1-718 549-3200. Feb. 5-6, from 1 to 4.)

By George!—On Feb. 6 at 2, members of the chamber group VineyardMusicke will play music from the Revolutionary War era, including tin-whistle tunes, sea chanteys, and political songs. This program takes place at the Morris-Jumel Mansion in upper Manhattan, which served as General George Washington's headquarters for six weeks in 1776. (Jumel Terrace at 160th St. 923-8008.)

The Paper Bag Players—In a new show, "The Paper Bag Players, Rain or Shine." Suggested ages: four to nine. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448. Saturdays and Sundays at 2. Through March 6.)

SPORTS

Last One Around the Track Is a Rotten Egg—The eighty-seventh annual Millrose Games will feature Jackie Joyner-Kersee soaring over hurdles and executing high jumps, Suzy Hamilton running the mile, and high-school students competing in an indoor carnival of track-and-field events. (Madison Square Garden. Feb. 4, from 5:30 to 11. 465-6000.)

HOME TEAMS

Knicks—Vs. the Orlando Magic, Feb. 6 at 1.

Nets—Vs. the San Antonio Spurs, Feb. 6 at 6.

Rangers—Vs. the Islanders, Feb. 2. . . . ¶ Vs. the Washington Capitals, Feb. 7. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Buffalo Sabres, Feb. 8 at 7:40.

Devils—Vs. the Buffalo Sabres, Feb. 2. . . . ¶ Vs. the Ottawa Senators, Feb. 4. . . . ¶ Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Feb. 5. (Game time, 7:35.)

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; and the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300.)

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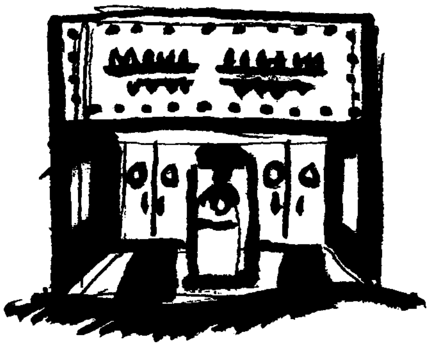

THE MOVIES

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6	7	8				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 28.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 2: A program of short films from "The 24th International Tournée of Animation."
Theatre 3: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).
Theatre 4: "Faraway, So Close" (directed by Wim Wenders; in German), with Otto Sander.
Theatre 5: "The Snapper" (†).
Theatre 6: "Naked" (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
"Recollections of the Yellow House" (1989, João Cesar Monteiro; in Portuguese).

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 3: "Car 54, Where Are You?" (Bill Fishman). From Feb. 4: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 3: "Heaven and Earth" (†). From Feb. 4: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (Peter Medak).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: "The Remains of the Day" (James Ivory), with Anthony Hopkins.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 3: "Tombstone" (†). From Feb. 4: "Gunmen" (Deran Sarafian).
Theatre 3: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Pelican Brief" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Feb. 3: "Philadelphia" (†). From Feb. 4: "I'll Do Anything" (James L. Brooks), with Nick Nolte and Whittni Wright.
Theatre 6: "Golden Gate" (John Madden), with Matt Dillon.
Theatre 7: "Intersection" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Feb. 3: "Living Proof: HIV and the Pursuit of Happiness" (Kermit Cole), a documentary.
From Feb. 4: "Aileen Wuornos: The Selling of a Serial Killer" (Nick Broomfield).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza), with Christopher Reid and Christopher Martin.
Theatre 2: "Blink" (Michael Apted), with Madeleine Stowe and Aidan Quinn.
Theatre 3: "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).
Theatre 4: "The Summer House" (Waris Hussein), with Joan Plowright, Julie Walters, Jeanne Moreau, and Lena Headey.
Theatre 5: "The Air Up There" (Paul Michael Glaser).
Theatre 6: Through Feb. 3: "Blink." From Feb. 4: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner).
Theatre 7: "Fiorile" (†).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 3: "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (Lasse Hallström), with Johnny Depp and Juliette Lewis. From Feb. 4: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner).
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 3: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza). From Feb. 4: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (Peter Medak).
Theatre 5: "Blink" (Michael Apted), with Madeleine Stowe and Aidan Quinn.
Theatre 6: "Intersection" (†).

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: "Grumpy Old Men" (†).
Theatre 2: "Blink" (Michael Apted), with Madeleine Stowe and Aidan Quinn.
Theatre 3: "Tombstone" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 3: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza). From Feb. 4: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "The Pelican Brief" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 3: "Car 54, Where Are You?" (Bill Fishman). From Feb. 4: "Gunmen" (Deran Sarafian).
Theatre 3: "Intersection" (†).

Aidan Quinn and Madeleine Stowe in "Blink."

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Beethoven's 2nd" (Rod Daniel); and "Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann).

Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
"Farewell My Concubine" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "Iron Will" (Charles Haid).
Theatre 2: "Golden Gate" (John Madden).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Wrestling Ernest Hemingway" (Randa Haines).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Grumpy Old Men" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 3: "Beethoven's 2nd" (Rod Daniel); and "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit" (Bill Duke). From Feb. 4: "Gunmen" (Deran Sarafian).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
"A Perfect World" (Clint Eastwood).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Intersection" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 3: "Six Degrees of Separation" (Fred Schepisi). From Feb. 4: "I'll Do Anything" (James L. Brooks).

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 3: "Blink" (Michael Apted). From Feb. 4: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner).
Theatre 2: "Tombstone" (†).
Theatre 3: "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 2: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 3: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 4: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 5: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Piano" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Car 54, Where Are You?" (Bill Fishman).
Theatre 2: "Philadelphia" (†).

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Shadowlands" (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "The Pelican Brief" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Pelican Brief" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Naked" (†).

Tower East, 3rd Avenue at 71st Street. (879-1313)
Through Feb. 3: "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" (Lasse Hallström).
From Feb. 4: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (Peter Medak).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Intersection" (†).

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "Shadowlands" (†).
Theatre 2: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Blink" (Michael Apted).
Theatre 2: "Golden Gate" (John Madden), with Matt Dillon and Joan Chen.
Theatre 3: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Pelican Brief" (†).
Theatre 5: Through Feb. 3: "Philadelphia" (†). From Feb. 4: "I'll Do Anything" (James L. Brooks).
Theatre 6: Through Feb. 3: "Car 54, Where Are You?" (Bill Fishman). From Feb. 4: "Gunmen" (Deran Sarafian).
Theatre 7: "Grumpy Old Men" (†).

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Iron Will" (Charles Haid).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 3: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza). From Feb. 4: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Between the Teeth" (directed by David Byrne and David Wild).
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "The War Room" (D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus).

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Six Degrees of Separation" (Fred Schepisi).
Theatre 2: "A Perfect World" (Clint Eastwood), with Kevin Costner and Eastwood.

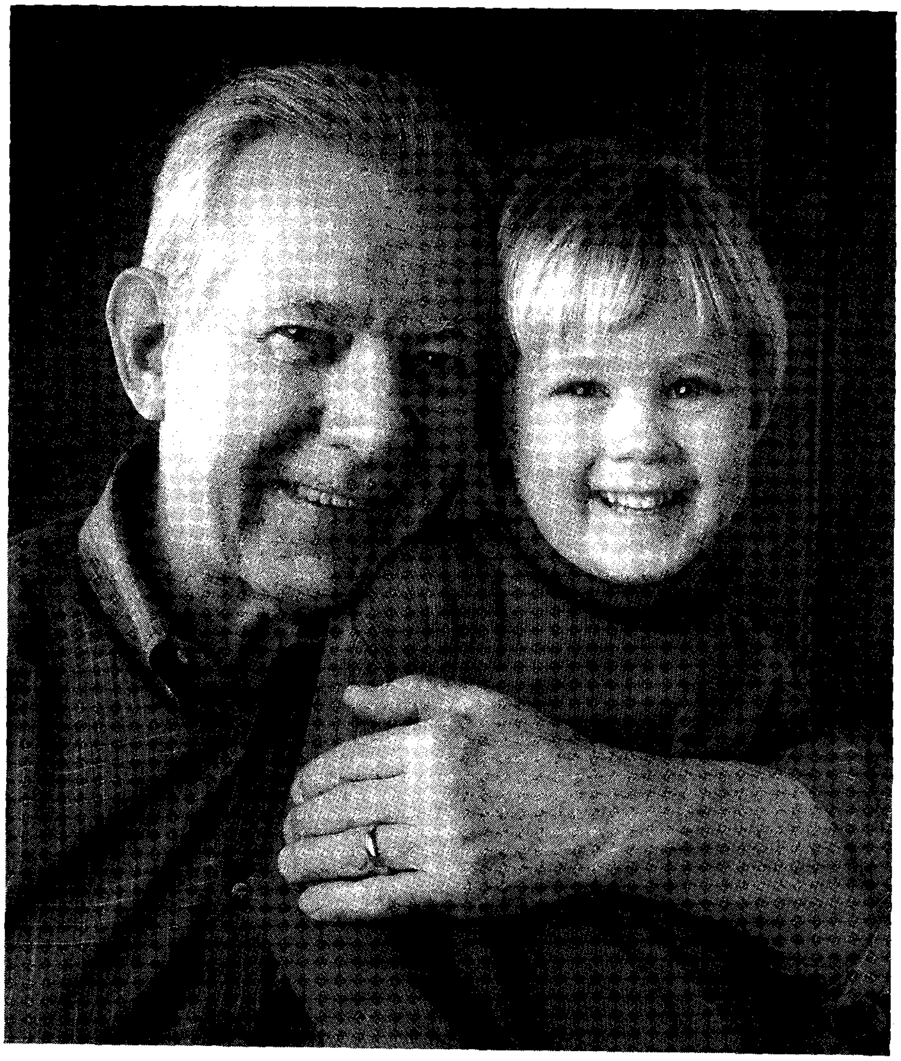
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Beethoven's 2nd" (Rod Daniel); and "Shadowlands" (†).
Theatre 2: "Shadowlands" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 3: "Bad Girls" (Amos Kollek). From Feb. 4: "Paris, France" (Gerard Ciccoritti).
Theatre 2: "The Accompanist" (Claude Miller; in French).
Theatre 3: "Blue" (†).
Theatre 4: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

ROMAIN SLOCOMBE

To treat symptomatic benign enlarged prostate:

Only one medicine can shrink the prostate.



PROSCAR®

(FINASTERIDE)

Until recently, there wasn't a medicine that could help the condition known as symptomatic benign prostate enlargement or BPH. But now there is PROSCAR, the first oral prescription medicine that can shrink an enlarged prostate.

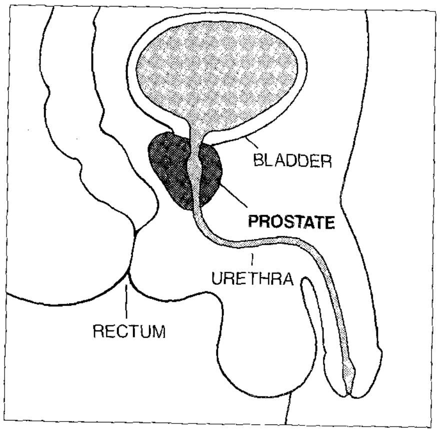
However, it is important to know the following: PROSCAR doesn't work for everyone. Even though your prostate may shrink, you may not see an improvement in urinary flow or symptoms. And you may need to take PROSCAR for 6 months or more to see whether it helps you.

How PROSCAR can shrink an enlarged prostate.

As a man ages, a key hormone can help cause the prostate to grow. PROSCAR actually blocks the production of this hormone, so it helps shrink the prostate to a smaller size in many men. As a result, some men treated with PROSCAR experience an increased urinary flow and an improvement in urinary symptoms.

Why you should see your doctor soon.

Your doctor has several options for the treatment of symptomatic BPH: watchful waiting (monitoring the condition with regular checkups), medication, or surgery. It's important to see your doctor because the problem doesn't usually get better by itself. In many cases, the prostate continues to enlarge and the symptoms may get worse. So if your urinary symptoms are bothering you, have your family doctor or a urologist assess your condition and ask if PROSCAR is an appropriate treatment for you.



The prostate surrounds part of the urethra, the tube that carries urine from the bladder. As the prostate enlarges, it can squeeze the urethra and cause urinary problems.

It is also important to have regular checkups. *While benign prostate enlargement is not cancer and does not lead to cancer, the two conditions can exist at the same time.*

Remember, only a doctor can evaluate your symptoms and their possible causes. So, if your urinary symptoms are bothering you, don't wait any longer. You may find that your enlarged prostate can be made into a smaller problem.

For more information about prostate enlargement and PROSCAR, call 1-800-635-4452 today.

TABLETS
PROSCAR® 5mg
(FINASTERIDE)

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Please see patient information on the following page.

J3PO35(701)-PSA761

PATIENT INFORMATION ABOUT PROSCAR® (Prahs-car)
Generic name: finasteride (fin-AS-tur-eyed)

PROSCAR is for the treatment of symptomatic benign prostatic hyperplasia and for use by men only.

Your doctor may prescribe PROSCAR if you have a medical condition called benign prostatic hyperplasia or BPH. This occurs only in men.

Please read this information, as well as the leaflet which accompanies your medication, before you start taking PROSCAR. Also, read the leaflet each time you renew your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss PROSCAR when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups.

What is BPH?

BPH is an enlargement of the prostate gland. After age 50, most men develop enlarged prostates. The prostate is located below the bladder. As the prostate enlarges, it may slowly restrict the flow of urine. This can lead to symptoms such as:

- a weak or interrupted urinary stream
- a feeling that you cannot empty your bladder completely
- a feeling of delay or hesitation when you start to urinate
- a need to urinate often, especially at night
- a feeling that you must urinate right away.

Treatment options for BPH

There are three main treatment options for BPH:

- **Program of monitoring or "Watchful Waiting".** If a man has an enlarged prostate gland and no symptoms or if his symptoms do not bother him, he and his doctor may decide on a program of monitoring which would include regular checkups, instead of medication or surgery.
- **Medication.** Your doctor may prescribe PROSCAR for BPH. See **"What PROSCAR does"** below.
- **Surgery.** Some patients may need surgery. Your doctor can describe several different surgical procedures for BPH. Which procedure is best depends on your symptoms and medical condition.

What PROSCAR does

PROSCAR lowers levels of a key hormone called DHT (dihydrotestosterone), which is a major cause of prostate growth. Lowering DHT leads to shrinkage of the enlarged prostate gland in most men. This can lead to gradual improvement in urine flow and symptoms over the next several months. However, since each case of BPH is different, you should know that:

- Even though the prostate shrinks, you may NOT see an improvement in urine flow or symptoms.
- You may need to take PROSCAR for six (6) months or more to see whether it helps you.
- Even though you take PROSCAR and it may help you, it is not known whether PROSCAR reduces the need for surgery.

What you need to know while taking PROSCAR

- **You must see your doctor regularly.** While taking PROSCAR, you must have regular checkups. Follow your doctor's advice about when to have these checkups.
- **About side effects.** Like all prescription drugs, PROSCAR may cause side effects. Side effects due to PROSCAR may include impotence (or inability to have an erection) and less desire for sex. Each of these side effects occurred in less than 4% of patients in clinical studies. In some cases side effects went away while the patient continued to take PROSCAR.

Some men taking PROSCAR® (Finasteride) may have a decrease in the amount of semen released during sex. This decrease does not appear to interfere with normal sexual function.

You should discuss side effects with your doctor before taking PROSCAR and anytime you think you are having a side effect.

- **Checking for prostate cancer.** Your doctor has prescribed PROSCAR for symptomatic BPH and not for cancer—but a man can have BPH and prostate cancer at the same time. Doctors usually recommend that men be checked for prostate cancer once a year when they turn 50 (or 40 if a family member has had prostate cancer). These checks should continue while you take PROSCAR. PROSCAR is not a treatment for prostate cancer.
- **About prostate specific antigen (PSA).** Your doctor may have done a blood test called PSA. PROSCAR can alter PSA values. For more information, talk to your doctor.
- **A warning about PROSCAR and pregnancy.**

PROSCAR is for use by MEN only.

PROSCAR is generally well tolerated in men. However, women who are pregnant, or women who could become pregnant, should avoid the active ingredient in PROSCAR.

If the active ingredient is absorbed by a woman who is pregnant with a male baby, it may cause the male baby to be born with abnormalities of the sex organs. Therefore, any woman who is pregnant or who could become pregnant must not come into direct contact with the active ingredient in PROSCAR.

Two of the ways in which a woman might absorb the active ingredient in PROSCAR are:

Sexual contact. Your semen may contain a small amount of the active ingredient of the drug. If your partner is pregnant, or if you and your partner decide to have a baby, you must stop taking PROSCAR and talk to your doctor. If your partner could become pregnant, proper use of a condom can reduce the risk of exposing her to your semen (discuss this further with your doctor).

Handling broken tablets. Women who are pregnant or who could become pregnant must not handle broken tablets of PROSCAR.

PROSCAR tablets are coated to prevent contact with the active ingredient during normal handling. If this coating is broken, the tablets should not be handled by women who are pregnant or who could become pregnant.

If a woman who is pregnant comes into contact with the active ingredient in PROSCAR, a doctor should be consulted. Remember, these warnings apply only if the woman exposed to PROSCAR is pregnant or could become pregnant.

How to take PROSCAR

Follow your doctor's advice about how to take PROSCAR. You must take it every day. You may take it with or between meals. To avoid forgetting to take PROSCAR, it may be helpful to take it the same time every day.

Do not share PROSCAR with anyone else; it was prescribed only for you.

Keep PROSCAR and all medicines out of the reach of children.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT PROSCAR AND BPH, TALK WITH YOUR DOCTOR. IN ADDITION, TALK TO YOUR PHARMACIST OR OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDER.

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J3PO35(701)-PSA761

MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 3: "Schindler's List" (†). From Feb. 4: "Gunmen" (Deran Sarafian).
Theatre 3: "In the Name of the Father" (†).
Theatre 4: "Schindler's List" (†).
Theatre 5: "Golden Gate" (John Madden).
Theatre 6: "The Remains of the Day" (James Ivory).
Theatre 7: Through Feb. 3: "The Pelican Brief" (†). From Feb. 4: "I'll Do Anything" (James L. Brooks).
Theatre 8: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).
Theatre 9: "Shadowlands" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit" (Bill Duke), with Whoopi Goldberg.
Theatre 2: "Car 54, Where Are You?" (Bill Fishman).
Theatre 3: "Iron Will" (Charles Haid).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
Through Feb. 3: "Iron Will" (Charles Haid).
From Feb. 4: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Strictly Ballroom" (Baz Luhrmann).
Theatre 2: "Short Cuts" (Robert Altman).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 3: "Faraway, So Close" (Wim Wenders; in German). From Feb. 4: "I'll Do Anything" (James L. Brooks).
Theatre 4: "Farewell My Concubine" (†).
Theatre 5: "A Perfect World" (Clint Eastwood), with Kevin Costner and Eastwood.
Theatre 6: "The Wedding Banquet" (Ang Lee).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"Heaven and Earth" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through Feb. 3: "A Dangerous Woman" (Stephen Gyllenhaal).
From Feb. 4: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (Peter Medak).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Joy Luck Club" (Wayne Wang).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "The Summer House" (Waris Hussein).
Theatre 2: "Like Water for Chocolate" (Alfonso Arau; a Mexican film, in Spanish).

Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th. (586-1900)
Through Feb. 3: "The Trial" (David Jones).
From Feb. 4: "Aileen Wuornos: The Selling of a Serial Killer" (Nick Broomfield).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Remains of the Day" (James Ivory).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"The Age of Innocence" (Martin Scorsese).

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
Through Feb. 3: "Grumpy Old Men" (†).
From Feb. 4: "My Father, the Hero" (Steve Miner).

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
"Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).

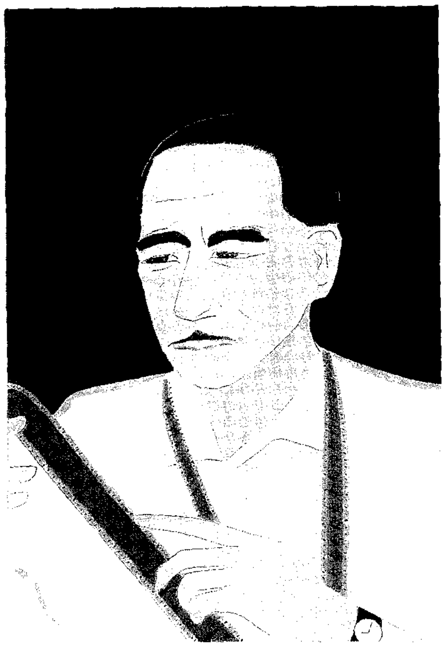
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Fiorile" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Scent of Green Papaya" (Tran Anh Hung; in Vietnamese).
Theatre 3: "Blue" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Piano" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Snapper" (†).
Theatre 6: "The Accompanist" (Claude Miller; in French).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Schindler's List" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 3: "Iron Will" (Charles Haid). From Feb. 4: "Gunmen" (Deran Sarafian).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 3: "Car 54, Where Are You?" (Bill Fishman). From Feb. 4: "I'll Do Anything" (James L. Brooks).
Theatre 4: "Blink" (Michael Apted).
Theatre 5: "Intersection" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Feb. 3: "The Pelican Brief" (†). From Feb. 4: "Romeo Is Bleeding" (Peter Medak).

Thalia, B'way at 95th. (316-4962)
"Naked" (†).

Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Shadowlands" (†).
Theatre 2: "Golden Gate" (John Madden).



At the Walter Reade Theatre and Film Forum 2, the films of Yasujiro Ozu.

GEOFFREY PARKER

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128) Theatre 1: "Beethoven's 2nd" (Rod Daniel); and "Tombstone" (†). Theatre 2: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 3: "American Cyborg" (directed by Boaz Davidson). From Feb. 4: "Ace Ventura: Pet Detective" (Tom Shadyac).
Theatre 2: "Car 54, Where Are You?" (Bill Fishman).
Theatre 3: "House Party 3" (Eric Meza).
Theatre 4: "Carlito's Way" (Brian De Palma).
Theatre 5: "The Pelican Brief" (†).
Theatre 6: "Philadelphia" (†).
Theatre 7: "Blink" (Michael Apted).

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494) "Tombstone" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: "The Air Up There" (Paul Michael Glaser).
Theatre 2: "Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit" (Bill Duke), with Whoopi Goldberg.
Theatre 3: "Cabin Boy" (Adam Resnick).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340) "Intersection" (†).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 3: "Death Wish V: The Face of Death" (Allan A. Goldstein). From Feb. 4: "Gunmen" (Deran Sarafian).
Theatre 2: "Mrs. Doubtfire" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Through Feb. 3: "McCabe & Mrs. Miller" (1971, directed by Robert Altman).
Feb. 4-6: "Employees' Entrance" (1933, Roy Del Ruth); and "Baby Face" (1933, Alfred E. Green), with Barbara Stanwyck.
Feb. 7: Two early films by Yasujiro Ozu: "Dragnet Girl" and "Woman of Tokyo".
Feb. 8: "Three on a Match" (†); and "Heat Lightning" (1934, Mervyn LeRoy).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Feb. 2: "Wise Blood" (†); and "The Dead" (1987, John Huston).
Feb. 3: "Golden Earrings"(1947, Mitchell Leisen); and "Morocco" (1930, Josef von Sternberg).
Feb. 4-5: "The Night of the Hunter" (1955, Charles Laughton); and "Cape Fear" (1962, J. Lee Thompson).
Feb. 6: "The Rose Tattoo" (1955, Daniel Mann); and "The Fugitive Kind" (1960, Sidney Lumet).
Feb. 7: "Jean de Florette" (1985, Claude Berri; in French) and "Manon of the Spring" (1987, Berri; in French).
Feb. 8: "A Taste of Honey" (1962, Tony Richardson); and "The Loved One" (1965, Richrdson), with Robert Morse.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A program of films produced by Gaumont, the French movie studio. Feb. 3 at 2:30: "La Petite de Montparnasse" (1931, directed by Hanns Schwarz and Max de Vaucorbeil; in French). . . . Feb. 3 at 6: Early realist films (1911-13) by Henri Fescourt, Georges André Lacroix, and others. . . . Feb. 3 at 7:45: Early films (1906-15) by such directors as Alice Guy-Blaché and Gaston Ravel. . . . Feb. 4 at 2:30 and Feb. 6 at 3: Films made just after the First World War by Léon Poirier, Marcel l'Herbier, and others. . . . Feb. 4 at 6: Films made by Louis Feuillade between 1911 and 1914. . . . Feb. 4 at 7:30: Films made by Jacques Feyder between 1916 and 1918. . . . Feb. 5 at 1: "El Dorado" (1921, l'Herbier; a French silent film). . . . Feb. 5 at 3: "Daïnah, the Half-Caste" (1931, Jean Grémillon; in French); and "Zero for Conduct" (1933, Jean Vigo; in French). . . . Feb. 5 at 5 and Feb. 7 at 6: "Figaro" (1928, Gaston Ravel; a French silent film). . . . Feb. 6 at 1 and Feb. 8 at 6: "The Seamstress" (1928, E. B. Donatien; a French silent film). . . . Feb. 6 at 5 and Feb. 7 at 2:30: "The Passion of Joan of Arc" (1928, Carl Dreyer; a French silent film). . . . Feb. 8 at 2:30: "Caroline Chérie" (1950, Richard Pottier; in French). . . . ¶ Feb. 3 at 3 and 6: "Paul Bowles: The Complete Outsider" (1993, Catherine Warnow and Regina Weinreich). . . . ¶ Feb. 4 at 3 and 6, Feb. 5-6 at 2:30 and 5, and Feb. 8 at 3 and 6: Five different programs of French animated films.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—A program of films by Yasujiro Ozu, all in Japanese. Feb. 2 at 2 and 6:45: "The Flavor of Green Tea Over Rice" (1952). . . . Feb. 2 at 4:15 and 9: "Early Summer" (1951). . . . Feb. 3 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "Tokyo Story" (1953). . . . Feb. 4 at 2 and Feb. 5 at 4 and 9:10: "Early Spring" (1956). . . . Feb. 5-6 at 6:45: "Equinox Flower" (1958). . . . Feb. 6 at 4 and 9:10 and Feb. 8 at 2: "Tokyo Twilight" (1957). . . . ¶ Feb. 5-6 at 2: "The Red Pony" (1949, Lewis Milestone), with Robert Mitchum, Myrna Loy, and Peter Miles.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—Films by Steven Spielberg. Feb. 5 at 1:30: "Jaws" (†). . . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 4: A program of independent and experimental films. . . . ¶ Films by Oscar Micheaux. Feb. 6 at 2: "Body and Soul" (1924), with Paul Robeson. . . . Feb. 6 at 4:30: "Within Our Gates" (1920), with Evelyn Preer.

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—The documentary films of Frederick Wiseman. Feb. 3 at 5:30 and Feb. 5 at 2: "Titicut Follies" (†). . . . ¶ Feb. 4 at 6 and Feb. 6 at 2: "Welfare" (1975).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Feb. 2 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Un Coeur en Hiver" (1993, Claude Sautet; in French), with Daniel Auteuil, Emmanuelle Béart, and André Dussollier.

Japan Society, 333 E. 47th St. (752-0824)—"Pacific Reflections: How Japan and America See Each Other in Film." Feb. 4 at 6:30: "House of Bamboo" (1955, Samuel Fuller), with Robert Ryan, Robert Stack, and Shirley Yamaguchi. . . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 1: "My Geisha" (1962, Jack Cardiff), with Shirley MacLaine, Yves Montand, and Yoko Tani. . . . ¶ Feb. 5 at 3: "My Wife Has Blue Eyes" (1964, Yoshiro Kawazu; in Japanese).

Brooklyn Museum, 200 Eastern Parkway. (1-718 638-5000)—A program of African-American independent films. Feb. 5 at 2: "Killer of Sheep" (1977, Charles Burnett). . . . ¶ Feb. 6 at 2: "Bless Their Little Hearts" (1984, Billy Woodberry).

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MOVIES IN BRIEF

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Ace Ventura: Pet Detective—When the Miami Dolphins' mascot disappears on the eve of the Super Bowl, Ace (Jim Carrey) is called in to save the day. With Sean Young, Courteney Cox, Tone Loc, and Dan Marino. Directed by Tom Shadyac. Opening February 4.

Aileen Wuornos: The Selling of a Serial Killer—Nick Broomfield's documentary about Aileen Wuornos, the sometime prostitute who killed seven men in 1990 and 1991. Opening February 4.

Between the Teeth—A documentary (by David Byrne and David Wild) about Byrne and his band, 10 Car Pile-Up, on tour in 1992. Opening February 2.

Fiorile—The legend of an ancestral curse follows a Tuscan family from the Napoleonic Wars to the present day. Directed by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani. In Italian. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) Opening February 2.

Gunmen—A smuggler and a street tough (Christopher Lambert and Mario Van Peebles) go after a fortune stolen from a drug dealer (Patrick Stewart), who's also looking for it. Directed by Deran Sarafian. Opening February 4.

I'll Do Anything—A romantic comedy set in Hollywood, with Nick Nolte as a character actor suddenly saddled with his long lost six-year-old daughter (Whittni Wright). Also with Joely Richardson, Albert Brooks, and Julie Kavner. Written and directed by James L. Brooks. Opening February 4.

My Father, the Hero—Andre (Gérard Depardieu) takes his fourteen-year-old daughter (Katherine Heigl) on vacation, and in order to impress a fellow-traveller, she claims that they are lovers. Written by John Patrick Shanley and directed by Steve Miner. Opening February 4.

Paris, France—Erotic author Lucy Quick (Leslie Hope), suffering from writer's block and an unhappy marriage, is inspired by a torrid affair. With Raoul Trujillo, Victor Ertmanis, and Peter Outerbridge. Directed by Gerard Ciccoritti. Opening February 4.

Recollections of the Yellow House—A black comedy about an old crackpot who brings anarchy to a small town. Directed by João Cesar Monteiro. In Portuguese. Opening February 2.

Romeo Is Bleeding—The story of a cop on the take (Gary Oldman), his wife (Annabella Sciorra), his mistress (Juliette Lewis), and a hit woman (Lena Olin). Also with Roy Scheider. Directed by Peter Medak. Opening February 4.

CURRENT FILMS

(The following notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given.)

Blue—After "The Double Life of Véronique," the Polish director Krzysztof Kieślowski has come up with another lovely and perplexing film. Julie (Juliette Binoche) loses her husband and daughter in a car accident and sees that loss as a chance to break free. She moves to Paris, sheds a lover, and takes an apartment, but at every turn the past catches up. Her memories tend to rush back in with a burst of music (the husband was a composer); at times, the movie is more like a sound-and-light show than a drama. It could easily have been too grand and mournful for its own good, but it's lightened, against all expectation, by a glancing comedy. Binoche gives her most responsive performance to date. In French.—A.L. (Reviewed in our issue of 12/13/93.) (Quad Cinema, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Farewell My Concubine—Chen Kaige's film is a big, eventful historical soap opera of the "Doctor Zhivago" school. The movie follows a pair of male Beijing Opera performers, Cheng Dieyi (Leslie Cheung) and Duan Xiaolou (Zhang Fengyi), from their school days, in the nineteen-twenties and early thirties, to their farewell performance together, in 1977. Chen keeps the action charging forward breathlessly, for more than two and a half hours, and at a certain point you begin to realize that the obvious theatre-versus-life ironies are only a small part of what the movie is about. The real subject is whether it's possible, in times that demand perpetual revolutions in values, to remain true to anyone or anything: an art, an ideal, a friend, a wife, oneself. In Mandarin.—T.R. (10/11/93) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

Fiorile—Directed by Paolo and Vittorio Taviani. In Italian. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Village East Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Grumpy Old Men—A sentimental comedy in the feuding-friends genre of "The Sunshine Boys," set in a wintry Minnesota village where the main pastime is ice fishing. The bickering next-door neighbors are a retired high-school history teacher (Jack Lemmon) and a retired TV repairman (Walter Matthau) who jockey for the attention of a flighty, voluptuous widow (Ann-Margret, as a former Berkeley prof!) who moves in across the street. Matthau and Lemmon have a few exuberant moments, but the laugh lines are quaint vulgarities and put-downs, and the triangle is hopelessly tricked up (Ann-Margret as a sexy-angelic lover of silly "mature" men is especially forced). Donald Petrie directed Mark Steven Johnson's script.—M.S. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, and Orpheum VII. . . . ¶ Columbus Circle; through Feb. 3.)

Heaven and Earth—A near-farcical end to Oliver Stone's trilogy on the Vietnam War. Hiep Thi Le plays Le Ly, a villager caught in events beyond her control, not the least of them a lousy script. Through a mixture of pious voice-over and random brutality, we get a potted history of Vietnamese suffering: the colonizing French, the creepy Vietcong, and then all those randy grunts. But the movie itself feels like the latest in a long line of insults; the startling lack of dramatic resonance, and the frailty of the central performance, tend to flatten rather than raise your interest. Help is on hand from Tommy Lee Jones, as a United States marine with a tender heart and a history of killing, who marries the heroine and takes her back home. He looms large in the film, but is eventually outplayed by Stone's manic style.—A.L. (1/17/94) (Ziegfeld. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex; through Feb. 3.)

Intersection—What's romantic about a weepie with a completely self-absorbed hero? In this roadkill of a movie, Richard Gere plays a successful Vancouver architect whose recent life flashes—slowly—before his (and our) eyes during a car crash. He's caught between a life-affirming magazine columnist (Lolita Davidovich) and his wife (Sharon Stone), a cool number who's also his partner in an architectural firm and the mother of his thirteen-year-old daughter (Jenny Morrison). The women do what they can, but Gere, trying to be heartfelt, ends up as dithery and solipsistic as Woody Allen. (Maybe it's the dialogue—Allen's old collaborator Marshall Brickman co-wrote the script with David Rayfiel.) The director, Mark Rydell, handles the time jumps so poorly that it seems as if Davidovich were watching Gere's flashbacks. The film's cloistered upper-middle-class ambience operates as emotional insulation; here lovers don't "meet cute"—they meet rich. With Martin Landau and David Selby; based on Paul Guimard's novel "Les Choses de la Vie," and a screenplay by Guimard, Jean-Loup Dabadie, and Claude Sautet.—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, Baronet, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

In the Name of the Father—Jim Sheridan's ragged, fascinating new movie is based on the autobiography of Gerry Conlon, a Belfast Catholic who spent nearly fifteen years in British prisons for a crime he didn't commit. Conlon (Daniel Day-Lewis) and three friends were accused of participating in the 1974 bombing of a pub near London, in which five people were killed; the only evidence against Conlon was his own confession, extracted from him by means of a brutal police interrogation. When Sheridan and his co-screenwriter, Terry George, try to function as historians, the movie feels shaky. But when Gerry and his father (Pete Postlethwaite)—who has been convicted on a different charge—get to prison, the filmmakers begin to explore their real theme, which is the intimate emotional consequences of oppression and prejudice. The picture turns into a kind of stylized morality play about the right and the wrong ways for Irishmen to respond to distorted portraits of their character, and it's terrifically effective. Day-Lewis, Postlethwaite, and Don Baker (playing a chillingly self-possessed I.R.A. man) are superb.—T.R. (1/24/94) (First & 62nd Cinemas, and Chelsea Cinemas.)

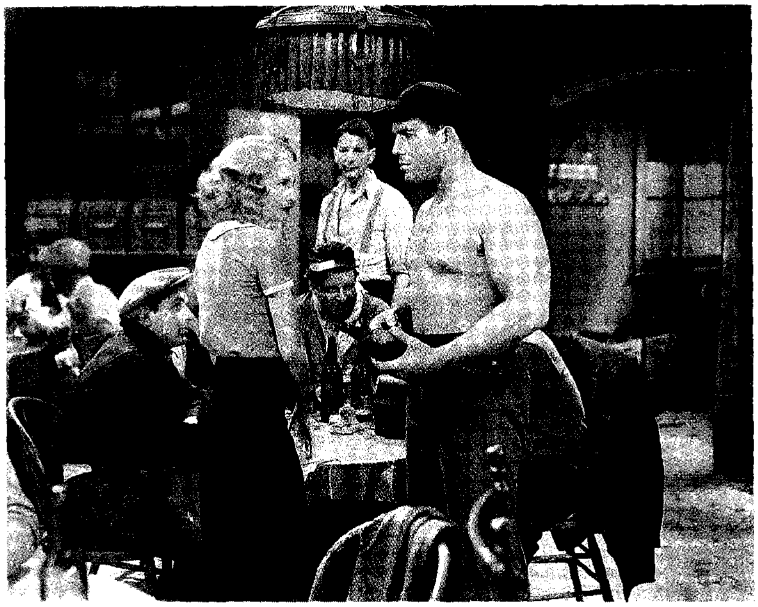
Mrs. Doubtfire—Robin Williams impersonates a stocky, middle-aged female housekeeper, and he's too inventive an actor not to get a few gigantic laughs out of the stunt. But the picture as a whole isn't in the class of "Tootsie" and "Some Like It Hot," mostly because its premise is sentimental, not cynical: Williams's character, a divorced man, becomes Mrs. Doubtfire in order to get around a court-ordered custody arrangement and spend more time with his adorable children. Lessons are learned, loved ones are hugged, and personal growth is achieved—as usual, at the expense of comedy. Some, apparently including Williams, like it warm and cuddly, too. Nobody's perfect. Directed—with a very heavy hand—by Chris Columbus.—T.R. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Gotham Cinema, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and National Twin.)

Naked—A pitch-black comedy, written and directed by Mike Leigh, in which the unstoppable Johnny (David Thewlis) comes to London and makes life difficult for everyone he meets: new girlfriends, old girlfriends, a drunken Scotsman on the street. The smell of misanthropy, which wafts from one Leigh picture to the next, hangs more heavily than ever in the air, and the movie is badly unbalanced by the presence of a token yuppie—not a character at all, just a lazy exercise in caricature. But Thewlis saves the day: the Johnny he creates is lean and hungry, foulmouthed but erudite, his low expectations crossed with high spirits. He's one of the most compelling rebels in modern cinema.—A.L. (1/17/94) (Angelika Film Center, 68th St. Playhouse, and Thalia.)

The Pelican Brief—The script is adapted from the novel by John Grisham, but not adapted enough. Two Supreme Court Justices are murdered, and Darby Shaw (Julia Roberts), a mere law student, decides that the trail leads all the way to the White House. She gets help from a journalist, played by Denzel Washington, who struggles manfully to keep her, and the movie, alive. (Only one of them survives.) The director is Alan J. Pakula, who shows his class in a couple of nervy murder sequences, but flounders through the rest of the story. Pale and overwrought, Julia Roberts looks worried that she may be in the wrong movie.—A.L. (12/27/93-1/3/94) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex; through Feb. 3.)

Philadelphia—Tom Hanks plays a lawyer dismissed from his firm, apparently for incompetence, but really because he has AIDS. Enter Denzel Washington as a personal-injury attorney—relaxed, witty, and homophobic, but prepared to fight for justice. The result is an unorthodox blend of courtroom drama and old-style weepie, and somehow it comes off. With Jonathan Demme in charge there's a guarantee of taste and skill—if anything, the movie is too optimistic, convinced that everyone in America can be won round to its own standards of tolerance. Of course it should stand up for gay rights, but do we also need a speech about how wonderful lawyers are? Fortunately, this preachiness never swamps the picture, thanks largely to spirited playing from Tom Hanks, who looks full of life right up to the end. The movie is affecting, sometimes silly, but determined to take risks.—A.L. (12/27/93-1/3/94) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

The Piano—Sometime in the last century, a Scottish mute called Ada (Holly Hunter) travels to New Zealand with her beloved piano and her daughter Flora (Anna Paquin). She is engaged to Stewart (Sam Neill), but it is his right-hand man, Baines (Harvey Keitel), who becomes the focus of her interest. He buys the piano, and gives her a chance to win it back: an erotic agreement that gathers intensity and drives the film onward to its gasping conclusion. The writer and director, Jane Campion, has turned her native New Zealand, with its desolate beaches and writhing forests, into a potent backdrop; the rain and mud make the love story look like trench warfare—you come away from the movie battered and amazed. It's almost too wrought and compressed for its own good, but the performances breathe it full of life. Hunter, especially, gives a fiery portrait of a rebellious Victorian spirit.—A.L. (11/29/93) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)



In the "Warner Bros. Before the Code" series at Film Forum 2, Barbara Stanwyck and Nat Pendleton in "Baby Face."

PHOTOFEST

Schindler's List—The story of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), a dashing and resourceful German Catholic businessman who saved over a thousand Polish Jews from almost certain annihilation by the Nazis, is extraordinary even by the standards of Holocaust literature. Steven Spielberg's film, adapted by Steven Zaillian from the 1982 book by Thomas Keneally, runs better than three hours and doesn't seem a minute too long. Spielberg respects the essential mystery of the protagonist's heroism, and uses his prodigious skills with an intensity that he hasn't shown in a long time: he captures images of experiences that most of us thought we would never see represented adequately on the screen. This is by far the finest, fullest dramatic (i.e., nondocumentary) film ever made about the Holocaust. Along with Neeson, who is brilliant, the standouts in the large cast are Ralph Fiennes, Ben Kingsley, and Embeth Davidtz.—T.R. (12/20/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Regency.)

Shadowlands—Richard Attenborough's film chronicles the relationship between the British writer C. S. Lewis (played by Anthony Hopkins) and an American woman named Joy Davidman Gresham (Debra Winger). The screenplay, by William Nicholson (adapted from his earlier television and stage versions of the story), initially emphasizes the comic incongruity of the love affair: Lewis, a shy and scholarly bachelor in his fifties, suddenly falls hard for a blunt, outspoken woman who doesn't quite fit the profile of an Oxford professor's wife. But the real drama is in the poignant brevity of the relationship, which is cut short by Joy's death from cancer. The picture isn't actually very good; it's just a tearjerker with clumsy interpolations of theology. (Lewis, a prominent Christian thinker, is shown delivering lectures on the spiritual implications of happiness and pain.) Hopkins and Winger are fascinating to watch, though. Winger—who is, as always, vivid, honest, and intuitive—gives the whole idea of Americanness an astonishing radiance. And Hopkins, realizing that he has to put up some real emotional capital or else get blown off the screen, comes through with the most impassioned acting of his career. Also with Edward Hardwicke and John Wood.—T.R. (Beekman, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, and Metro Cinema.)

The Snapper—A return trip to the Dublin of "The Commitments," and every bit as welcome as the earlier film. The Curley family is in trouble: young Sharon (Tina Kellegher) is going to have a snapper—a baby, that is, conceived after a drunken fumble on a car hood. Sharon knows who the father is, but she won't let on to her friends, let alone to her father (Colm Meaney). It sounds like a drab little tale, but in the hands of director Stephen Frears it becomes a headlong tumble into good humor; he seems as fascinated by his characters as the family is by the new arrival, and the camera scuttles around, tolerantly picking up details. The script is adapted by Roddy Doyle from his own novel, which guarantees a string of firecracker jokes, caustic but never cruel; look out for the bemused parents discovering the joy of sex.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Tombstone—In this gaudy, ramshackle piece of Western legendry, the Earp brothers—Wyatt (Kurt Russell), Virgil (Sam Elliott), and Morgan (Bill Paxton)—team up with Wyatt's pal Doc Holliday (Val Kilmer) to war against an outlaw mob dubbed the Cowboys. Playing a hedonist who keeps his ironic distance until the bullets fly gives Kilmer an edge on the rest of the cast; drawling between coughs and oscillating like a sine wave, he radiates a virtuoso superciliousness. And Russell's stalwart Wyatt anchors the action even when it becomes impossibly operatic. But narrative incoherence undercuts whatever pleasure the audience might find in the heroes' outsize gestures and humorous flourishes. George P. Cosmatos directed Kevin Jarre's script. The enormous cast includes Dana Delany as Wyatt's gal, Joanna Pacula as Doc's, and Powers Boothe, Michael Biehn, and Stephen Lang as the most garish villains.—M.S. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, Olympia, and Embassy 1. . . . ¶ Village Theatre VII; through Feb. 3.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow.)

Jaws (1975)—It may be the most cheerfully perverse scare movie ever made. Even while you're convulsed with laughter you're still apprehensive, because the editing rhythms are very tricky, and the shock images loom up huge, right on top of you. When the three protagonists are in their tiny boat, trying to find the shark that has been devouring people, you feel that Robert Shaw, the malevolent old shark hunter, is so manly that he wants to get them all killed; he's so manly he's homicidal. The director, Steven Spielberg, sets up bare-chested heroism as a joke and scores off it all through the movie. The high point of the film's humor is in our seeing Shaw get it; this nut Ahab, with his hypermasculine basso-profundo speeches, stands in for all the men who have to show they're tougher than anybody. The shark's cavernous jaws demonstrate how little his toughness finally adds up to. This primal-terror comedy quickly became one of the top-grossing films of all time. Richard Dreyfuss is the bookish ichthyologist, and Roy Scheider plays the local chief of police. With Lorraine Gary; Murray Hamilton; Carl Gottlieb, who co-wrote the (uneven) script with Peter Benchley, as Meadows; and Benchley, whose best-selling novel the script was based on, as an interviewer.—P.K. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Feb. 5.)

Three on a Match (1933)—Bette Davis, Joan Blondell, and Ann Dvorak (who goes through some steamy emotions) are the girls who grew up together and, after several years, meet again in the big city. At lunch one day, they light three cigarettes on one match, and, according to the superstition (which is said to have been invented and publicized by Ivan Kreuger, the Swedish match king), there's bad luck ahead. A modest, entertaining little melodrama from Warners, directed by Mervyn LeRoy. With Warren William, Glenda Farrell, Lyle Talbot, Humphrey Bogart, Edward Arnold, Jack La Rue, Grant Mitchell, and Allen Jenkins.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Feb. 8.)

Titicut Follies (1967)—Fred Wiseman's first documentary, photographed in the state hospital for the criminally insane at Bridgewater, Massachusetts. Crude in technique, but a revealing (and shocking) piece of visual muckraking. It has some unforgettable scenes.—P.K. (Museum of Television and Radio; Feb. 3 and 5.)

Wise Blood (1979)—In John Huston's version of Flannery O'Connor's first novel, Brad Dourif plays Hazel Motes, a demented country boy who goes to the city to "do things I never done before." These "things" include starting a new religion—the Church Without Christ, "where the blind don't see and the lame don't walk and the dead stay that way"—and committing an absurdist murder. Working from a screenplay by Benedict Fitzgerald, Huston fitfully captures O'Connor's sardonic, down-home humor, which satirizes man's feeble efforts to escape or ignore original sin. But the film conveys no interior life. What we get isn't simply the bones of the book but a morbid, inscrutable oddity—a skeleton that snickers. The movie is blessed with a couple of remarkable supporting performances. As a bogus, blind street preacher, Harry Dean Stanton wears a self-congratulatory smirk—he's proud he's a quack. And Ned Beatty turns a radio evangelist into a confident, if cut-rate, Elmer Gantry.—M.S. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 2.)

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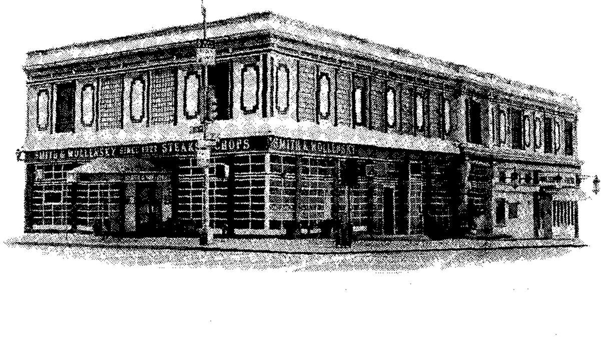


THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

DONNA HANOVER GIULIANI, ON THE MOVE

MOVING is always disconcerting, Donna Hanover Giuliani was saying. She recalled that when she left Miami and her newscasting job at WCKT (now WSVN), in 1982, her fiancé, Rudolph Giuliani, who was then Associate Attorney General in Washington, told her that he would take care of everything. "I was living in this little sort of a one-room studio," Mrs. Giuliani recalled. "I would go jogging, and one day I went jogging and found a Perrier bottle and a Coke bottle. And I brought them back and I put flowers in them. And I kept the bottles because I wanted to remember—after I had a lovely apartment someday and everything—I just wanted to remember that life wasn't always that good, or that gracious.

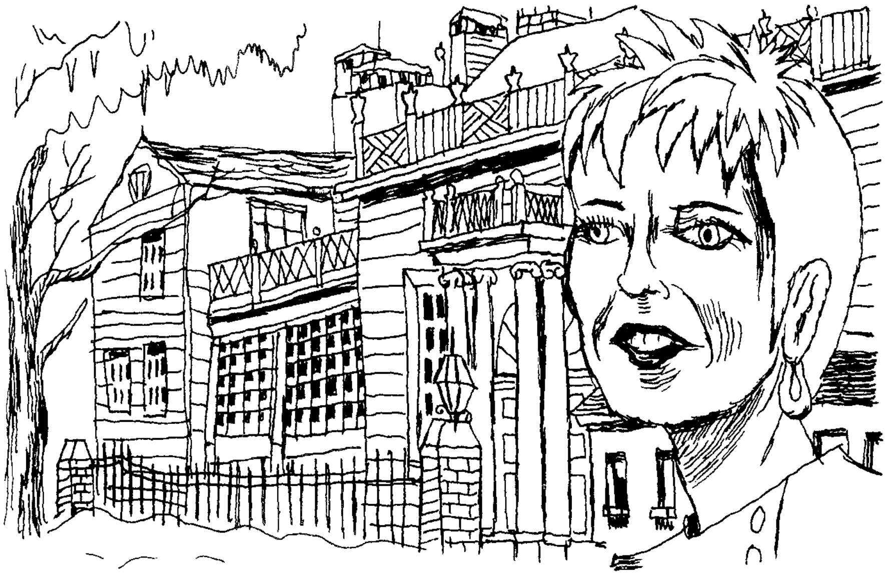
"So, Rudy has supervised the packing, and everything is all packed up. I'd come back from taking things to the thrift shop—and there's my Coke bottle and my Perrier bottle on top of the garbage. And I said to Rudy, 'You threw away my Perrier bottle! You threw my Coke bottle!' And he's like, 'I'm sorry. I had no idea. They weren't labelled.' " She retrieved the bottles from the trash can and packed them.

Now, once again, they were in boxes, somewhere in Gracie Mansion. It was Mrs. Giuliani's first official morning at her new house, and we had invited ourself over. Outside the Mansion, the sidewalks were glazed with ice. The dog runs in Carl Schurz Park were also frozen over, and the regulars had stayed away. There were no moving vans in the cobblestone driveway that winds from East End Avenue up to the hook of land overlooking the East River where the Scottish immigrant and successful New York merchant Archibald Gracie built his Federal-style "country seat," in 1799. The Parks Commission bought the house in 1896, the first mayor to take up residence there moved in in 1942 (that mayor was Fiorello LaGuardia, and he made the move reluctantly), and the Giulianis were not quite moved in when we called at the guard booth, inside which someone had taped up a page torn from a newspaper with small photographs of the mayor's newly appointed commissioners and aides.

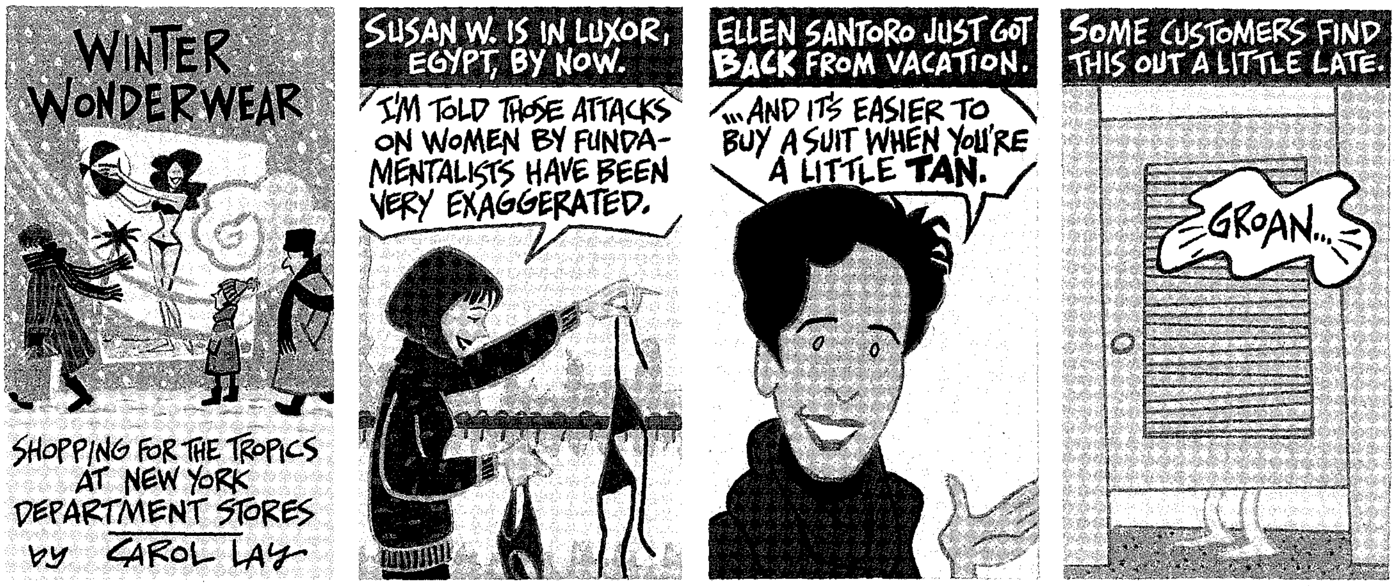
Mrs. Giuliani, wearing a crimson T-shirt, black leggings, white crew socks, and a pair of frayed running shoes, met us in her office, a small beige room in the basement which was to be repainted dove-white, with Dresden-blue trim. "Have you ever seen a bigger mess?" she asked. The floor was cluttered with, among other things, a Moe Ginsburg bag holding what appeared to be numerous small galoshes; an arrangement of wilted lilies; and a Lucite rack holding dozens of strands of pastel pearls. There was a tiny refrigerator in the office, toward which Mrs. Giuliani moved in search of a Diet Pepsi. On its door was a roughly drawn sketch with the title, "I Like to Hug and Kiss my Daddy by Caroline."

Mrs. Giuliani is not new to the neighborhood—the Giulianis' previous residence, where they lived for eleven years, was an apartment in a high-rise on East Eighty-sixth Street—but still, she explained, the move had not been easy. "I brought two babies home to that apartment," she said, "and there's something special about that."

We headed upstairs to the main floor, and paused at the staircase to the private quarters, on the second floor. Andrew's



ILLUSTRATIONS BY GARY PANTER


WINTER WONDERWEAR
SHOPPING FOR THE TROPICS AT NEW YORK DEPARTMENT STORES
by CAROL LAY
SUSAN W. IS IN LUXOR, EGYPT, BY NOW.
I'M TOLD THOSE ATTACKS ON WOMEN BY FUNDAMENTALISTS HAVE BEEN VERY EXAGGERATED.
ELLEN SANTORO JUST GOT BACK FROM VACATION.
...AND IT'S EASIER TO BUY A SUIT WHEN YOU'RE A LITTLE TAN.
SOME CUSTOMERS FIND THIS OUT A LITTLE LATE.
GROAN...

football lay atop a newel post. Mrs. Giuliani had told us that she had called Mary Lindsay, the wife of the most recent Republican mayor—and also the last mayor to have lived in the Mansion with small children—seeking advice about how to bring up a seven-year-old boy and his four-year-old sister in a house where docents conduct tours of its public rooms every Wednesday and Thursday. (Nearly twenty-five thousand visitors tour Gracie Mansion each year.) "She said, 'Feel your way, do your own thing, enjoy it—or you will go nuts,' " Mrs. Giuliani reported.

Mrs. Giuliani, who is forty-three years old, has short blond hair, green eyes, and the face of a state-fair queen. This morning she looked a little overwhelmed; it had been a trying first week. Andrew's antics as his father gave his inaugural address had become a national story, and her maternal skills had been questioned by the child-rearing guru Dr. T. Berry Brazelton, in a front-page story in the *Times*. "Neither Rudy nor I considered for a second telling him to sit down," she said when we asked about it. The first time she saw Andrew do this, she said, was four years ago. "I started to move to bring him back to his seat," she went on. "And then I saw Rudy put his arm around his shoulder, and I said, 'You know, Rudy wants him there.' " She added, "In fact, when Andrew read the refrain—'It should be so and it will be so'—Rudy and I compared notes later and both of us thought, Gee, his reading is coming along very well." She paused, and then said, "I was startled when people were so astonished."

On the main floor, to one side of a large foyer, is the entrance to a rather large parlor, and there David Reese, who is the Mansion's curator, and was helping the Giulianis get settled, drew our attention to what he identified as a nineteenth-century Egyptian Revival pier table. "We found the table in 1989 in storage at the New-York Historical Society," Reese went on, excitedly. "This is a piece that actually belonged to the Gracies."

We moved on through a library, with bottle-green walls and Childe Hassam engravings, and into the dining room. The wallpaper, which was hand-blocked, had been ordered sometime in the nineteenth century for an estate up the Hudson River, Mrs. Giuliani explained, but had never been hung. It was discovered in 1984, and sold to the Gracie Mansion Conservancy, a non-profit group that oversees the upkeep of the house and its collection. Ed Koch had it put up. It portrays a park idyll, featuring great poplar trees, willows, and women in hoop skirts.

Finally, Mrs. Giuliani took us up to the family quarters—five rooms, river view. On a table in a hallway were stacks of samples of pink-and-green flowered chintz. "Possibles," Mrs. Giuliani said. "I'm still not so sure." (The Giulianis have since decided not to reupholster.)

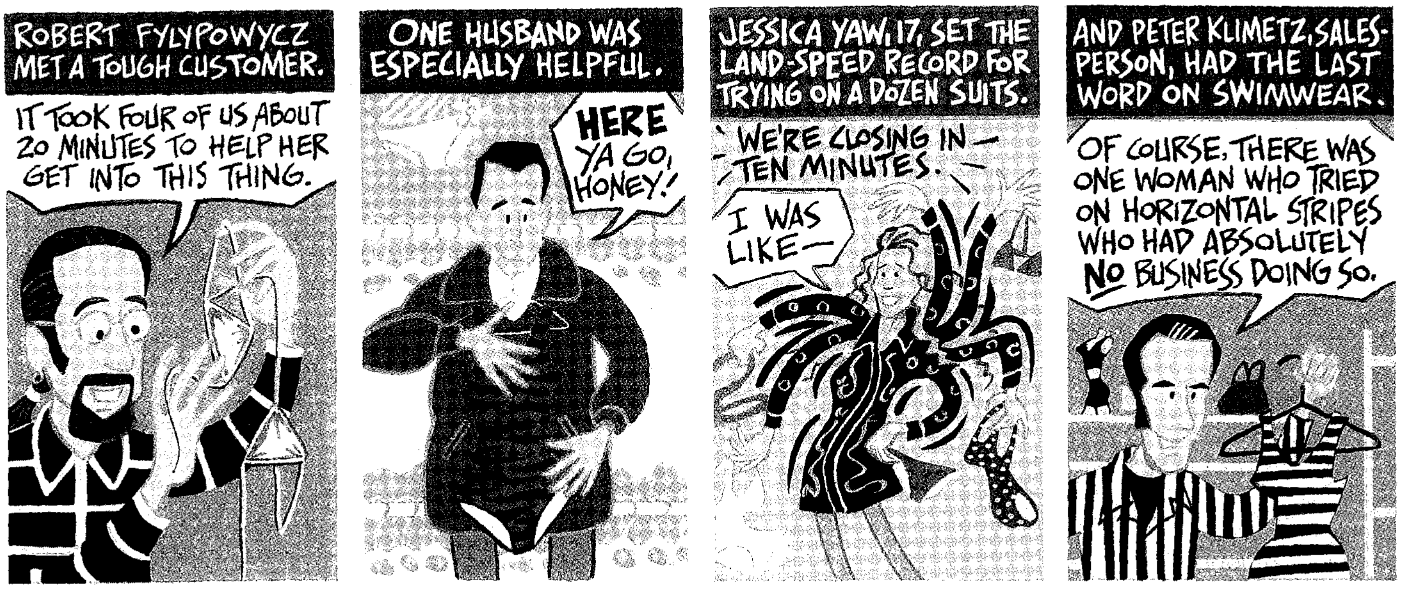
The closets, oddly, were in the bathrooms. "Who can understand it? It's an old house," Mrs. Giuliani said. The bedrooms had a not-yet-lived-in look. As we walked through a smallish parlor, Mrs. Giuliani looked around, then said "This is the other glove. I was wondering where that went!" and grabbed a small mitten lying on a shelf.

Then she walked into an adjoining room reserved for official guests, the rather grand "state bedroom," which has large windows in two walls and a stunning view of the river. She and Rudy had slipped into the Mansion one evening the previous week to spend a romantic night alone in this room.

Now Mrs. Giuliani looked at the river. The sun shimmered off the water. The move was still on her mind, it seemed. She told us that in their apartment they'd had the same view, "thirty-five floors up. Rudy and I were looking at it this morning, feeling a little nostalgic, and he said, 'It's just the same view, just lower down.' "

THE PLAYWRIGHT'S PROGRESS

THE first time David Rabe came to New York—in February of 1961, from Iowa—as an aspiring young playwright, there were fifteen plays on Broadway. In the early seventies, his powerful Vietnam play, "Sticks and Bones," which originated at the Public Theatre, had an enormously successful Broadway run at the Golden. Now, as his eighth play, "Those the River Keeps," begins its run Off Broadway, at the Promenade, there are only three new American plays running on Broadway: "Angels in America," "Laughter on the 23rd Floor," and "The Sisters


ROBERT FYLYPOWYCZ MET A TOUGH CUSTOMER.
IT TOOK FOUR OF US ABOUT 20 MINUTES TO HELP HER GET INTO THIS THING.
ONE HUSBAND WAS ESPECIALLY HELPFUL.
HERE YA GO, HONEY!
JESSICA YAW, 17, SET THE LAND-SPEED RECORD FOR TRYING ON A DOZEN SUITS.
WE'RE CLOSING IN— TEN MINUTES.
I WAS LIKE—
AND PETER KLIMETZ, SALESPERSON, HAD THE LAST WORD ON SWIMWEAR.
OF COURSE, THERE WAS ONE WOMAN WHO TRIED ON HORIZONTAL STRIPES WHO HAD ABSOLUTELY NO BUSINESS DOING SO.

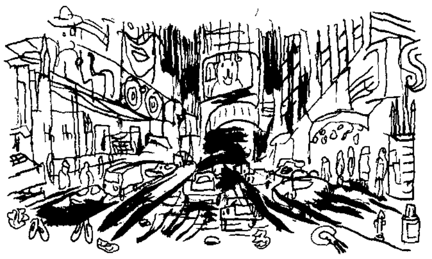
Rosensweig." After a dismal season, marred by the abrupt closing of several promising dramatic productions by established writers, and with houses currently dark all over town, we wondered how Rabe felt about launching "Those the River Keeps"—his first play in New York since "Hurlyburly" closed in 1985 after a ten-month run on Broadway—at this seemingly inhospitable moment.

On a recent evening, following a preview performance of the new play, we found Mr. Rabe typing a few notes for the next rehearsal in his tiny office backstage at the Promenade—he's directing his own play, for the first time in New York. He was immaculate in a teal silk shirt, gray slacks, and black boots; a pair of glasses suspended by a cord dangled against his chest. His longish hair has gone pure white, and his manner combines a shy wariness and a deliberate alertness; he's fifty-three, but there is still a touch of Iowa boyishness about him. As the theatre crew moved furniture and props on the set, a living room, and a stagehand scrubbed fake blood off its carpet, Mr. Rabe led us up to the relative quiet of the second tier, folded himself into a seat, and talked about the theatre.

He told us that his new play had followed a long, circuitous route on its way to New York. It was essentially completed, he said, before he directed a 1988 revival of "Hurlyburly," starring Sean Penn and Danny Aiello, in Los Angeles. "That was an incredible step for me as a director," he said. "To feel that I could do it, that I could handle the big guys. The hard part for me to learn was the conventional social skills, so to speak. It's a really different way of communicating from being a writer. But it's a deeply pleasing experience to take that step from the page and discover and discover and discover the play."

A few years later, before out-of-town runs in Princeton and Cambridge, Mr. Rabe and his producers considered bringing "Those the River Keeps" to Broadway. It didn't happen. What he had accomplished in the past, he said, "really didn't mean much to anybody. I remember Arthur Miller saying you start from scratch every time here in America. I've completed three plays since 'Hurlyburly'—this one is by far the most conventional of the three—and they've all got to the point where it would necessitate a production to learn what I have to learn. When I wrote them, I was still under the impression that that was possible, and that I had earned—not the right, exactly, but the opportunity to try to do some plays where you take a wild shot at something, and don't go by a formula—aren't guided by something predictable."

He rubbed his palms on his thighs and stared at the stage. "The economics have got so prohibitive, especially on Broadway," he continued. "They're tough, even *here*. I mean, this is a four-character play, with one set. To mount it on Broadway, I'm told, would cost more than a million dollars. And, with the situation the way it was—the way it *is*—critically, with a serious play, no matter who wrote it, the only way you can beat the system is if you have a movie star. Then you can run in spite of bad reviews. But if you're a serious play, or a complicated play, basically the *Times* can close you. That's just the way it is." He shrugged. "So then all these other things come into play when you're trying to get names"—movie stars—"and you can drive yourself nuts trying to schedule them, because you have to schedule them for six months, and they can't do it for six months." At one point or another over the last five years, Mr. Rabe told us, he and the play's producers spoke with Danny Aiello, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Al Pacino, Joe Mantegna, Armand Assante, and John Turturro. Eventually, after giving up the idea of going straight to Broadway, Rabe cast a character actor, Paul Guilfoyle, and a rising movie actress, Annabella Sciorra, as his leads.

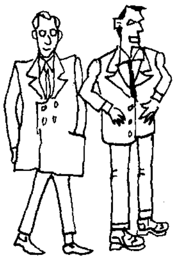


We remarked that the producer Lewis Allen, who recently cancelled plans to bring Sam Shepard's new play, "Simpatico," to New York, had told the *Times* that Broadway is becoming "not so much a creative environment, but rather a marketing environment." If this is true, what is lost? What are we losing if we don't have the theatre?

Mr. Rabe thought about it, and then said, "To speak to what is lost is hard for me, because I think it's an inevitable disappearance. I don't think it'll be around too much longer, in all honesty. I grew up in Dubuque, Iowa, where there was no theatre, and yet I feel it's part of my psyche, in a way I don't even understand. I don't quite know where it comes from, and my own sense of theatre, my own feelings about it run very deep. So I feel that it's some vast human loss. The obvious thing that's lost is the live relationship, but it's really more the language of the theatre, and the way the theatre language can stimulate the audience's imagination. There's something about the way the spoken language goes into a line that's different from when a movie does it. It's less dictatorial, and you have to participate much more."

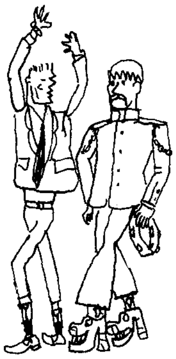
In the silent house, Rabe looked around for a moment, and then turned to thoughts of the work at hand. His play's themes, which he described as "the presence of the past, the seeds of the madness and violence that seem to be everywhere," hadn't yet made their presence felt to his satisfaction in the final scene, he said. "One of the things I hope to do in the last scene is to make that feel closer," he went on. "I think that you should feel that something awful could happen in that last scene. It's a little under-rehearsed, that scene. Not a little—it's quite a bit under-rehearsed." The life of the theatre beckoned. "Next week," he said, "we'll be able to bear down on it."

SUITABILITY

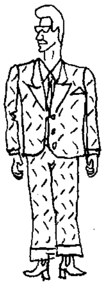


THE opening of Menswear Week in New York this year happened to coincide with the return to Madison Square Garden, for the first time in twenty-one years, of the National Hockey League All-Star Game. The N.H.L., of course, has never been known as a fashion-conscious operation, but under its new commissioner, Gary Bettman, it is attempting to upgrade its image, and the All-Star tilt featured not only a laser show of rock-concert proportions but redesigned uniforms in trendy schemes of black and silver and aqua and purple. An intrepid fashion scout prowling the locker rooms afterward could have returned with a couple of useful accessorizing tips as well. Tattoos, for example—stylish and durable, and wearable year-round. To a four-inch Chief Crazy Horse on his left bicep, Al Iafrate, the Washington Capitals' free-spirit defenseman, had recently added a homemade rainbow and arrow on his left leg. And stitches—a metalless alternative to piercing. Eric Lindros, the young Philadelphia Flyers star, was modelling a thin line of embroidery just under his right eye. But the most radical fashion statement of the All-Star celebration—of the entire week, perhaps—was issued before the game, by New York's latest trendsetter and enfant terrible, Andrew Giuliani. Accompanying his father out to center ice for the ceremonial face-off, Andrew donned a souvenir hockey jersey that the former Ranger great Rod Gilbert had originally intended to present to the Mayor. The shoulders drooped halfway down his arms, in a daring raglan effect, and the jersey's hem stopped just inches above his sneakers. It had become a hockey *dress*.

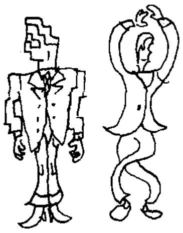
The rest of Menswear Week, as the fall and winter collections began to be shown over the following days, seemed much less venturesome. Except at Donna Karan's show, there weren't enough skirts—not on men, anyway. And there were no guys dressed to look like stuffed animals, the way there had been at the shows in Milan just a week or so before. The crowd at Jhane Barnes' show, at the Plaza, was dressed almost entirely in black, and the clothes themselves were mostly in sombre browns and olives. According to her press release, Jhane has recently been making use of an algorithmic computer program, fashioned exclusively for her, that has taken some of the busywork out of textile design and freed her up to gaze "into the future to see visions of the shapes of things to come." If what her models were wearing on the runway is any indication, the future is going to be *cold*—as cold, maybe, as New York in mid-January. In addition to your cotton mini-plaid shirt and your stretch-woven zip-front vest and your computer-designed scarf and your Swedish-elk aviator jacket, you will want to wear a sweater, pucker-knit or heavy-textured, loosely knotted on *top* of the jacket. The future may also be more repressed than we'd hoped; some of Jhane's suits featured not just two buttons or three buttons but *four* buttons.

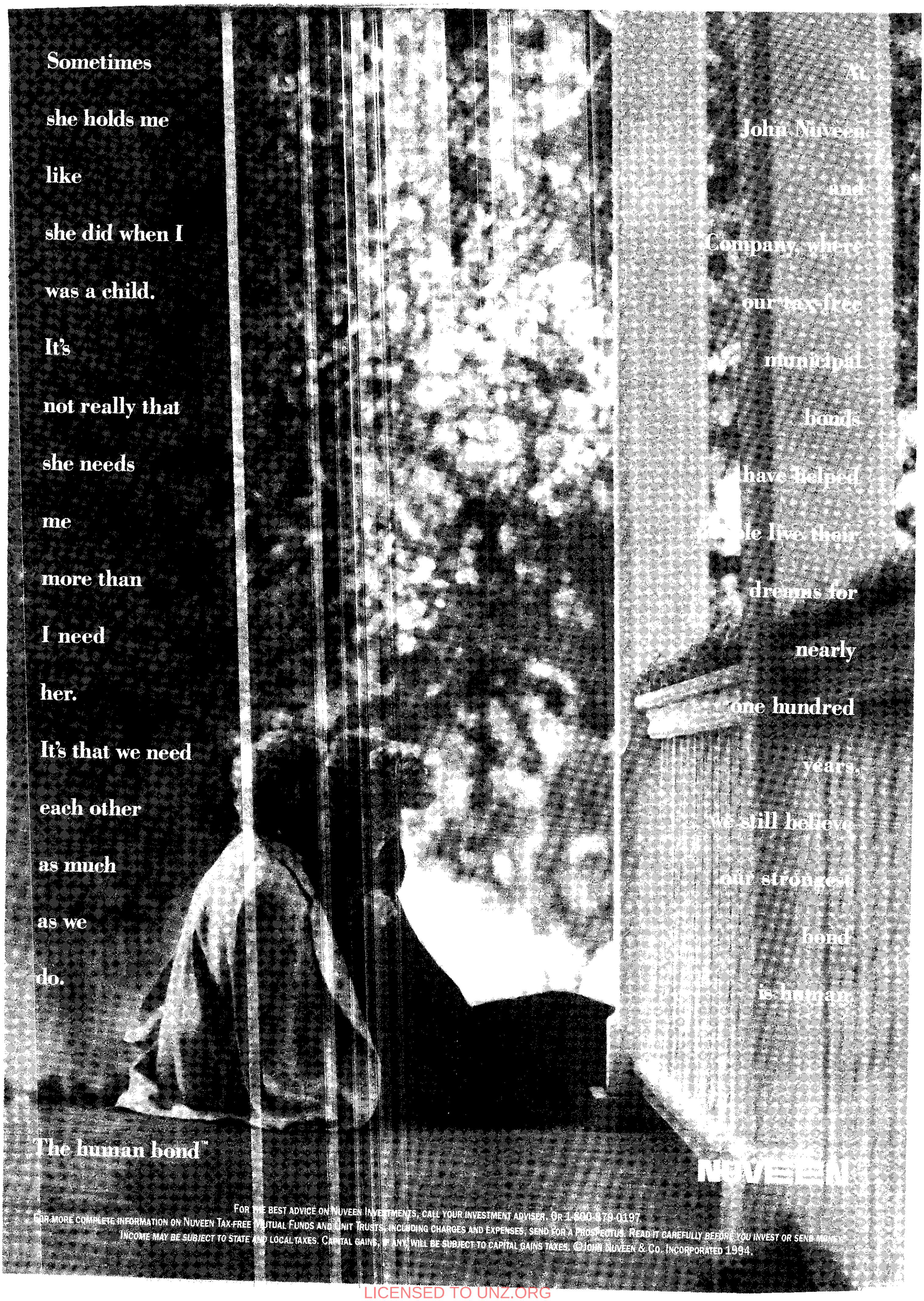


At the Joseph Abboud show, at the Public Library the following evening, the news was much the same. Fewer buttons, but lots of layers—*layers* of layers—and a disquieting allusion to the wintry theme of burst pipes and water in the basement; many of the models, that is, wore work boots and had their pants tucked into long socks. The only reprieve from all the arctic imagery came in the part of the show devoted to evening wear, and there the message was mixed. Mr. Abboud seemed to be saying, on the one hand, that if you venture out on a formal occasion you'll probably be so cold that you'll want to wear a plaid shawl—a big blanket, really—over your tux but, on the other hand, that maybe you'll be so warm you'll want to skip the tux and wear a brocade evening vest, black velvet sweatpants, velvet slippers, no shirt, and no socks.



As the week wore on, the same models turned up at show after show, until they began to seem like old friends—Troy, Christian, Ikonen, Josh, and the rest of the gang. They worked hard at appearing not to work hard. They slouched, they kept their hands plunged deep in their pockets, they pretended not to notice that their shoes were so new the soles were slippery. It wasn't their fault. The trouble with Menswear Week this year was that so much of what was on the runway was perfectly normal-looking stuff—suits and jackets and sweaters that a regular fellow could wear home or to the office without even attracting a second look—and where's the fashion in *that*? Here's a little hint for the menswear designers next year: Think Canada. Think long dresses with logos on the front and numbers on the back. Think little padded shorts, and woollen stockings held up with garter belts. ♦





Sometimes
she holds me
like
she did when I
was a child.
It's
not really that
she needs
me
more than
I need
her.
It's that we need
each other
as much
as we
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ANNALS OF IDEAS

INTELLECTUAL STOCK PICKING

Once a bastion of Reaganism, the Manhattan Institute and its "City Journal" are suddenly finding respectability in incorrigibly liberal New York.

BY JAMES TRAUB

In mid-March of 1992, a think tank called the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research conducted a morning-long symposium entitled "Rethinking New York: Policies for Renewal." Some two hundred and fifty New Yorkers from business, media, and government turned up at the Roosevelt Hotel in the midst of a snowstorm to hear about the institute's vision of the government of a great city. The speakers—there were twelve, most of them academics who wrote for the institute's quarterly, *City Journal*—described an urban crisis brought on, in large part, by the liberal order: by compassionate policies for the homeless (which wound up increasing homelessness), by market restrictions (which drove up the cost of housing), by a concern for due process which had run wild. Fred Siegel, a professor of history at Cooper Union, traced the increasing meanness of daily life and the decline of the city's public spaces to liberalism's attack not only on illegitimate but also on legitimate authority. "We've handed over our public spaces to the most predatory among us," he said, and he warned that "what was once unthinkable is now very much thinkable, even for New York loyalists, and that is the desire to leave." Like several of the other speakers, he returned again and again to the theme of restoring a vanished sense of civility and civic order.

The Manhattan Institute had invited Governor Mario Cuomo, Mayor David Dinkins, and former Mayor Ed Koch. None of them came; perhaps the snow had put them off. But one public figure sat quietly up front, scribbling on a yellow legal pad from eight-thirty until noon: Rudolph Giuliani. Giuliani had run for mayor in 1989, and though he had come within a hair of beating Dinkins, he had since been almost entirely ignored by the city's governing and policy élite. He had run on his record as a heroic prosecutor, and had only occasionally, and not very convincingly, addressed the issues that most New Yorkers cared about. For the 1993 elections, Giuliani needed to have a serious critique of Dinkins' handling of those issues if he was to capture the moderate and liberal voters who were coming to feel disillusioned with the Mayor (and perhaps, as Siegel implied, with New York itself). Since January, the candidate had been busy acquiring such a critique, in his laborious, lawyerly fashion: his chief policy aide, Richard Schwartz, had been hauling him around to the city's sages and special pleaders like a novice being given a crash course in enlightenment. It was Schwartz who brought Giuliani to the March symposium; they had already had two long lunches with *City Journal's* editorial board.

Schwartz, who is concerned lest the new mayor be seen as the captive of any group, and especially a conservative one, will not discuss Giuliani's relationship with the Manhattan Institute except to say that it is "one of many groups and elected officials across the country that are describing a new type of urban agenda." But others are less reticent about connecting the dots. "Privatization, the homeless proposal, social-services reform, his budget-cutting proposal—all that came from the Manhattan Institute circle," says Lawrence Kudlow, an economist who served in the Reagan Administration and acted as a periodic consultant to the Giuliani campaign. Giuliani's focus on "quality of life," which proved more appealing in this election than his standard-issue anticrime nostrums had in 1989, also bore the fingerprints of the institute. Fred Siegel, who served as an adviser to the campaign, not only wrote much of Giuliani's standard speech on the subject but began it with a lengthy quotation from himself on "the 'street tax' paid to drunk and drug-ridden panhan-

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dlers" and "the 'squeegee' men shaking down the motorist waiting for a light"—some of the most potent images of Giuliani's candidacy.

The Manhattan Institute, a fifteen-year-old public-policy-research body that was associated until quite recently with the Reagan right, has suddenly attained a level of respectability—of undismissability—amazing in a city usually thought of as incorrigibly liberal. Its star has risen with Giuliani, but will not necessarily fall if, as seems perfectly possible, he ignores the institute's proposals for systematic change now that he's in office. The real source of the think tank's influence is the extent to which it has shaped the new type of urban agenda that Richard Schwartz referred to. It has filled a void on the right by offering conservatives a positive and pragmatic way of talking about poverty and the cities. And it has also filled a void on the left. "The reigning ideas in the city were just ripe for exploding," says Jim Sleeper, a columnist for the *News*, who is both a liberal and a leading critic of New York's liberal order. "The Manhattan Institute has changed the terms of the intellectual debate, because there is no one on the left-liberal side that has put out anything remotely as fine-grained as they have."

Manhattan Institute president William Hammett: He's not an intellectual, but he knows how to sell ideas.

SCOTT HUNT

THE institute began its life as a missionary outpost of a fighting faith. It was launched by Antony Fisher, a British poultry magnate who had become a disciple of the Austrian free-market theorist Friedrich von Hayek. Hayek had told Fisher that the best thing he could do with his wealth was to enlist in the battle of ideas on behalf of capitalism. In 1955, in London, Fisher established the Institute of Economic Affairs, an aggressively conservative think tank, whose great claim to fame is the education of Margaret Thatcher. In the early seventies, he came to North America to direct a similar think tank in Vancouver. Shortly thereafter, Fisher hooked up with William Casey, who was soon to be the head of Reagan's C.I.A. but was then a wealthy lawyer, businessman, and demobilized Ford Administration official. In 1978, they founded the International Center for Economic Policy Studies, in New York. Its funding came from a small band of right-wing foundations, from corporations, and from conservative business figures who sat on the board.

The Center was born just as the sap was rising in right-wing Anglo-American circles. In 1979, Thatcher became Britain's Prime Minister; the following year, Ronald Reagan was elected President. Both saw themselves as conservative agents of change, fighting against the entrenched but exhausted ideology of liberalism. They needed a counter-ideology, and Reagan, during his first term, seized on a fervid tract called "Wealth and Poverty." Its author, George Gilder, was the program director of the Center. Gilder inveighed bitterly against liberal academics, liberal values, and the liberal custodians of old money. Gilder actually stood up for the "robber barons"; it was his book, more than anything else, that fostered the cult of the entrepreneur that became a central tenet of the Reagan era.

The smashing triumph of "Wealth and Poverty" might have insured the Center a permanent status as a holy place of free-market theory, cherished by initiates and ignored by heathens, if Gilder had not reduced his role there in order to tend to his newfound celebrity. In 1980, he asked William Hammett, the head of an even more obscure and minuscule Manhattan-based outfit called the Center for Libertarian Studies, to join the Center as its president.

Hammett crosses all sorts of lines. He's an Anglophile of forty-nine, and cultivates a Tory-establishment style: he wears a dark suit and wing tips to work, and only a ruffle in his graying hair keeps him from looking altogether bankerly; he's gracious and charming and has a slightly patrician air of detached amusement. But he is not in fact an establishment figure, and his politics are a matter of conviction rather than of breeding. In the late sixties, Hammett led the Southern Illinois University chapter of Young Americans for Freedom, and he went on to study at the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought, one of the few congenial spots at the time for a free-market theorist. Now he considers himself, he says, "a classical liberal," a child of Adam Smith.

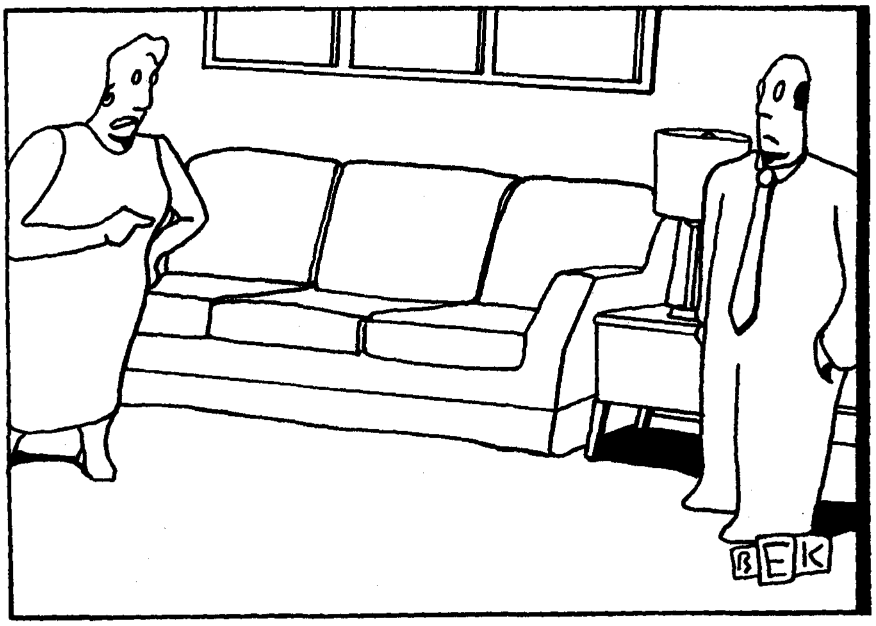
Hammett has a very different temperament from the men who founded the Center. He isn't a man of power or an entrepreneur, and neither is he a professional intellectual; he is an enthusiastic amateur. He lacks altogether the fervor, the theological cast, of a George Gilder or of any of the innumerable liberal or left-wing apostates known as neoconservatives. He is a lifelong conservative with no demons to exorcise and no points to prove. But he is not only unusually secular for a true believer in anything; he is also, by background and by temperament, a salesman. During college, Hammett sold encyclopedias and pots and pans, and after college and a stint in the Army he spent about four years selling securities at Lehman Brothers and other brokerages. After that, he spent a year selling condos at a resort in Maine. "I don't have any pretensions that I'm an original thinker or an intellectual," Hammett says. "Marketing is fun, and here we're marketing ideas."

When Gilder approached Hammett, the Center was foundering and was close to shutting down. Hammett immediately set about raising its profile. He changed its unrememberable name to the snappier Manhattan Institute for Policy Research. And he refused to link the institute with other think tanks Fisher helped create in the United States. Today, they remain obscure bastions of conservative ideology.

But Hammett's special gift was his nose for the Zeitgeist. The institute's current chairman, Richard Gilder (no relation of George's), refers to Hammett as "the greatest intellectual stock picker of our time." And his first great act of selection was his decision to fund the research of Charles Murray, a formerly liberal social scientist who had recently written a short study for the Heritage Foundation which attacked the welfare system. Murray argued that the principal cause of the persistence of the black underclass was not racism or Republican policy or structural changes in the economy but welfare itself. Welfare was more appealing than work; and recipients, once on it, became dependent. At the time Hammett met Murray, in 1982, he was unemployed and was virtually unknown. Hammett was so taken with Murray's frontal attack on sacred liberal principles that he immediately signed him up to write a book on the subject. The usual right-wing foundations declined to subsidize Murray's work, so Hammett agreed to victual the scholar for a year or so, even though the institute's treasury was almost empty.

When Murray's book on welfare, "Losing Ground," appeared, in 1984, Hammett secured a grant from the Liberty Fund to hold a two-day conference in New York on "the Murray thesis," and he invited not only fellow-travellers and academics but also liberal journalists and card-carrying members of the intelligentsia. He mailed out a thousand copies of the book, and sent early favorable reviews to other potential reviewers, counting on the herd instinct. And he spent every available penny in the institute's budget to send Murray barnstorming around the country. Even Hammett's critics on the left acknowledge his remarkable gifts in the field of intellectual marketing. Mitchell Moss, who is a professor of urban planning at New York University and served as an adviser to David Dinkins during the 1993 mayoral campaign, says, "Bill Hammett has mastered the ability to take an idea, turn it into an op-ed piece, then into a conference, then into a book. He understands that people aren't waiting for ideas; you have to promote them."

"Losing Ground," which has sold an amazing eighty thousand copies so far, put both Charles Murray and the Manhattan Institute on the map. "Wealth and Poverty" had given conservatives a rallying cry; Murray's book was a conversion document, and it arrived, as Hammett intuitively understood, at a propitious moment. Many nonconservatives were already becoming more sympathetic toward Daniel Patrick Moynihan's theory that family breakdown was largely responsible for the problems of the black underclass. But while Moynihan had stated that welfare contributed to these problems and that it needed to be reformed, Murray insisted that the War on Poverty was their chief cause and that welfare needed to be abolished altogether. His single-mindedness lost him many liberal readers, and critics charged that the book contained significant factual errors, but there's no question that "Losing Ground" achieved the Hayekian goal of shifting the debate from liberal to conservative terrain. Experiments in "workfare" and President Clinton's call for a "two years and out" welfare system at least indirectly reflect Murray's influence.



"If Neil Simon's going to keep writing them, we're going to keep seeing them."

By the mid-eighties, however, the Zeitgeist was moving on, and the Manhattan Institute was moving with it. The right was less preoccupied with exterminating vestiges of liberalism, and liberals were increasingly open to the virtues of deregulation and free markets. Hammett began steering the institute into less ideological waters, though without sacrificing its core principles. He nominated Nathan Glazer, the co-author, with Moynihan, of "Beyond the Melting Pot" and a former big-city liberal who had migrated to a more or less neoliberal position, to the board of trustees. Hammett also brought in school reformers to staff the institute's Center for Educational Innovation, a mini think tank devoted to school-reform issues, and founded the Judicial Studies Program to study the issue of tort reform.

On a more symbolic level, in 1991 the institute moved out of its old home, an elegant town house on East Seventy-first Street, which for some years had been serving as a conservative clubhouse, and moved to a featureless suite of rooms in an office building near Grand Central Terminal. Visitors are greeted by six stout copies of Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations" sitting on a bookcase. (Hammett's own office, though, is a lone throwback to the clubhouse. With twin crimson wing chairs, two slightly battered old desks, and shelves crowded with political-economy texts, Hammett's digs have something of the scuffed charm of a senior common room.)

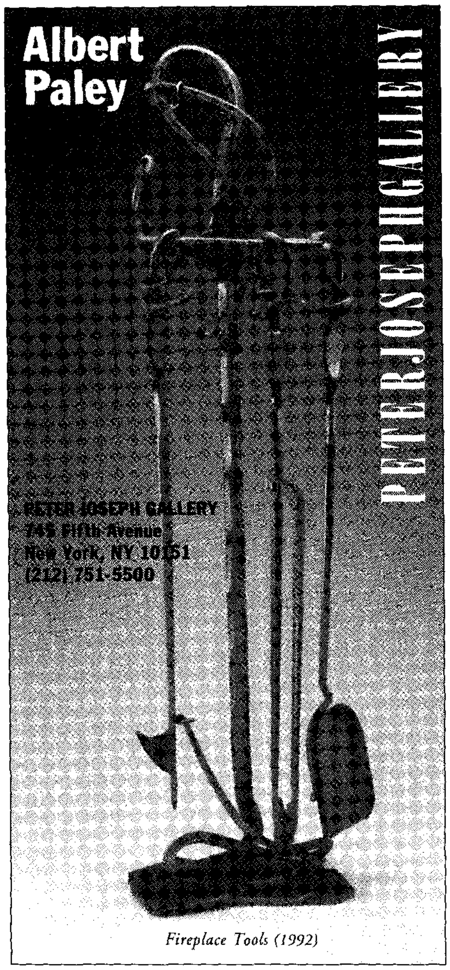
But the great turning point in the history of the Manhattan Institute was the establishment of *City Journal*. There was a widespread feeling in the institute's circle that, with the economic boom having run its course, New York City was heading for a crisis, and that most of the existing prescriptions for dealing with that crisis amounted to waiting for the state and federal governments to kick in their fair share. *City Journal* was born, in 1990, to explore other options.

From the outset, the distinguishing feature of *City Journal* was that many of its pieces criticized big-city liberalism while celebrating urbanism itself in a way completely at odds with the small-town boosterism of the conservative tradition. *City Journal's* implicit politics were much less evocative of George Gilder or Charles Murray than of the "new Democrat" positions of groups like the Progressive Policy Institute. The writers' faith in the marketplace was tempered by their admiration for the activist city government of another era and also by their own vestigial liberalism. The publication played a critical role in making the Manhattan Institute a different kind of place, a site of convergence for conservative businessmen like Hammett; disillusioned, formerly left-wing intellectuals like Fred Siegel (who has covered politics for *Commonweal*, the liberal Catholic biweekly, since 1981, and until last year served on the editorial board of Irving Howe's magazine, *Dissent*); and New York's traditional governing class of liberal centrists. The institute gained a reputation as a place where ideas were taken seriously and differences of opinion were respected. "To their credit, the Manhattan Institute ran an ecumenical church," Siegel says. "There was no attempt to impose a Party line."

City Journal, in effect, created a new center, to which members of the old center swiftly migrated. Henry Stern, who was the president of Citizens Union, a venerable good-government group, until last year, and is now Mayor Giuliani's parks commissioner, says, "They've made the moderate right a respectable political position to hold in New York City. They're not pro-life or anti-immigrant—that's not you. And you can take or reject things." Stern has been a regular at the institute's luncheons and forums for the last several years. Laurance Rockefeller, a moderate Republican with strong environmental concerns, recently joined the board. The institute's most important alliance, however—at least, symbolically—was with the late Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Wagner was the closest thing New York had to a civic conscience; he virtually defined what Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., has called "the vital center." Wagner was also a living link with an older brand of liberalism, typified by his father, New York's mayor in the fifties and early sixties, and his grandfather, the great New Deal senator: a restrained, pre-Great Society liberalism, with which many *City Journal* writers identify. According to Henry Stern, Wagner had come to feel that "the answer to every problem cannot be another government solution." Wagner's decision to endorse Rudolph Giuliani—a stunning blow to the Dinkins camp—may have been a public sign of his fear that the vital center was slipping away.

Wagner had been participating in institute events since the early eighties. In 1989, he was chairman of a panel at an institute conference on school choice. "We were really thrilled about it," says Hammett, who made sure that a picture of Wagner with one of his board members at that event found its way into the think tank's ten-year review. Henry Stern says that Wagner was "wary" of the institute, but he became an occasional visitor and participant. A week before the mayoral election, Wagner was chairman of another institute-sponsored quality-of-life symposium at the Roosevelt Hotel. And when he died, some two weeks after the election, he was in San Antonio working on a piece about public housing for *City Journal*.

The institute has broadened its sources of funding as well as its contacts. Its annual budget now approaches five million dollars, and it has received large grants not only from the usual roster of right-wing foundations but also from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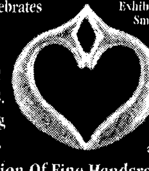

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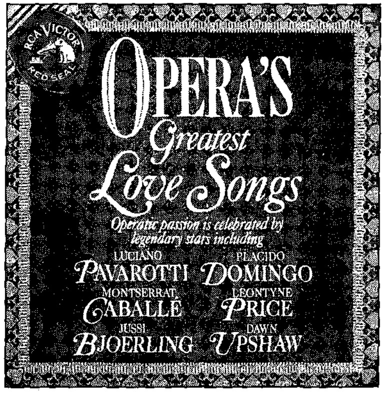

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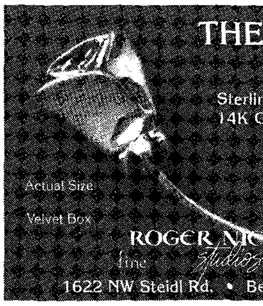

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liberal and apolitical groups, including the Markle Foundation and the Commonwealth Fund. Even so, the bulk of its individual contributions still come from conservative Wall Street figures—above all from Richard Gilder, who recently donated a million dollars to help develop alternative schools. And last year the institute was given more than three hundred thousand dollars by insurance, chemical, pharmaceutical, and tobacco companies, all of which are potential beneficiaries of the institute's campaign for tort reform.

I OFTEN wondered about Hammett, who apparently had never wrestled with his conscience as the institute's disillusioned liberals had. Hammett is notorious for the abruptness with which he can turn off his charm, and is said to be not only mercurial but tyrannical; no editor of *City Journal* has lasted much more than a year, and at least one has apparently come close to a nervous breakdown. One afternoon, as Hammett was going on about the evils of welfare, I said that I found the laissez-faire approach to the poor rather harsh. He shot me a condescending look. "I'm never one to give money to panhandlers in the city," he said. "Give one of these characters out here in the street asking for money—give 'em food and see what happens. They'll throw it in the gutter." Hammett's gray suit jacket was open, and he was absent-mindedly tapping a cherry-wood penknife against his thigh. "They don't want food," he continued. "They want money for drugs and booze. And anybody who thinks otherwise is just so damn naïve."

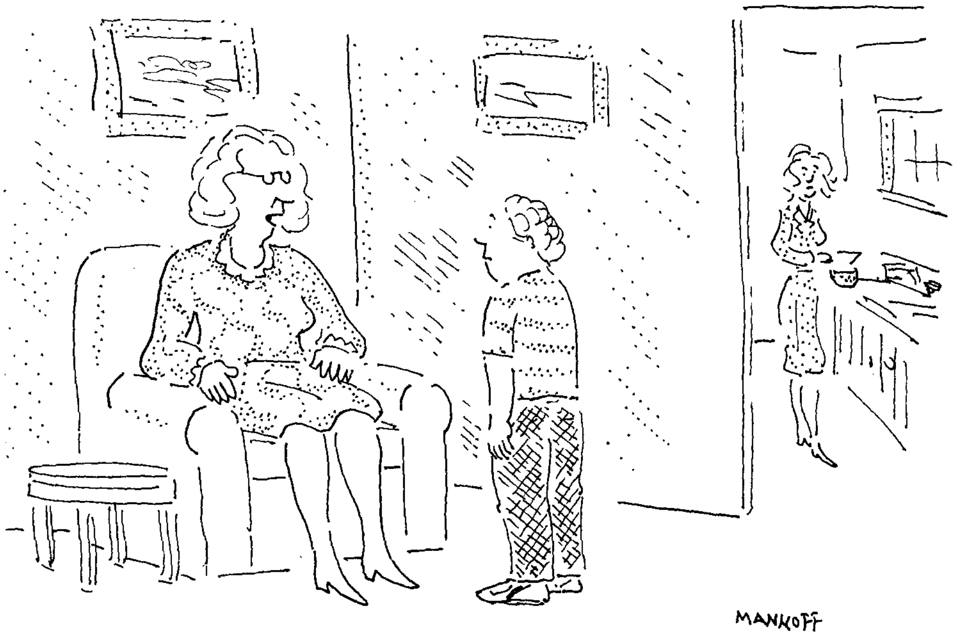
Hammett went on to say that he couldn't fathom why black kids didn't behave like immigrants, working hard and getting ahead. I suggested that their collective experience to date might not have given them much faith in the likelihood of success. "Are you saying it's *racism*?" Hammett asked incredulously. Now he stopped tapping; he was leaning forward, his thin mouth set. "Is that what you're saying?" It was as if he had suddenly realized that I was lost to reason. I asked Hammett if he thought that racism was no longer an important factor. "Of *course* there's racism," he said. "But there's also plenty of discrimination among whites. I mean, there's clubs in this city that you and I can't join, there's all sorts of discriminatory practices against us that are just *there*."

It seems incredible that an institution so closely associated with Reaganism and Anglo-American conservatism could capture such a significant part of the center in a city like New York. Hammett says he hasn't changed his principles, and his scorn for the city's down-and-out bears witness to his visceral politics, but he seems to have been influenced by the readiness of conservatives like Jack Kemp to confront the problems of cities and of the urban poor. At the same time, the rise of the institute has a great deal to do with the decline of traditional liberalism—a feeling that what was once a consensual faith, almost a civic religion, has degenerated into entrenched interests, on the one hand, and the petty absolutisms of "political correctness" on the other. Henry Stern asks, "Did we change? I don't think so. What *they* were doing changed. P.C. pushes the envelope ever leftward." Stern still clings to his liberalism like a union label. What is illiberal, he argues, is the "redistributionist" tilt of the city's budget, the siting of facilities for the homeless in the midst of stable communities, the loss of a sense of personal responsibility—issues that have all been explored extensively in the pages of *City Journal*.

Such anguished parsing and realigning make it almost impossible to recall what liberal idealism actually accomplished, or the power politics to which it was opposed. At a 1991 *City Journal* roundtable, a group of disgruntled liberals agreed that the principal legacy of the sixties was "moral deregulation"—a phrase of Fred Siegel's. Charles Morris, a former director of New York City's welfare program, even claimed, as archconservatives have, that "the civil-rights revolution . . . led straight to the reigning amoralism." Jim Sleeper became so annoyed with the echoing denunciations of welfare dependency and of the values of the poor that he tartly observed that the behavior of the rich in recent years had set "a standard of irresponsibility" that others could scarcely be blamed for imitating. "I felt a noticeable chill," Sleeper says. And then the discussion swerved back to the sins of the liberal élite, as if Sleeper had committed a breach of etiquette that was best ignored. Perhaps that was why Bobby Wagner was wary. There was something excessive in this scorn for failed gods.

Nonetheless, *City Journal* itself has increasingly shed the polemical edge of the earlier era of the Manhattan Institute's history. The best pieces have the bracing quality of honest inquiry into settled opinion. A recent article explained why enterprise zones, the anti-poverty miracle cure of Jack Kemp Republicans and of many new Democrats as well, won't actually work: "The primary reason for ghetto unemployment is not the lack of nearby jobs but the absence of social networks that provide entry into the job market." Another piece explained why the former schools chancellor Joseph Fernandez's "school-based management" program, beloved of the policy élite, was a failure: it had been hijacked by the teachers' union, and had failed to include either principals or parents. An article entitled "Hard Lessons on Homelessness" described a tight correlation between a rise in the number of people entering the shelter system and policy decisions that made it easier to gain access to permanent housing through the shelter system. The classic liberal assumption that nobody would choose to become homeless in order to reap the benefits of doing so was simply wrong, the author, Thomas Main, wrote. He quoted Dinkins' former director of services for the homeless, Nancy Wackstein, as saying, "This was something pretty wild, something we hadn't contemplated."

City Journal's alternative proposals tend to be rooted in a market model rather than a bureaucratic one, and also in a sense of history and a deep knowledge of the system. Thus Randall Filer, an economics professor at Hunter College, argued that "the housing market needs to be changed so that its lowest rung is no longer out of reach for the homeless." Filer pointed out that the flophouse, the dormitory, and the "cage" hotel of another generation had been eliminated through an array of housing regulations designed to prevent exploitation of the poor. The result, however, was a "choice between a shelter or the street." Filer suggested that the city reform, among other things, its zoning regulations and housing-maintenance and building codes, which together had made the construction of low-income housing virtually impossible. It was a proposal that held a risk of renewed exploitation, but it seemed scarcely worse than the current system.



"Dear, I hope you don't think I'm too old-fashioned, but do you think you could call me 'Grandmother' or 'Grandma' instead of 'Butt-Head'?"

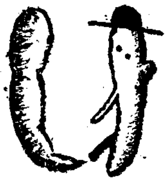
• •

City Journal articles have also called for the elimination of some of the oddities of New York's tax system, such as the unincorporated-business tax and the commercial-rent tax; the curtailment of rent-control laws; the privatization of the municipal-hospital system and of the vast stock of housing accumulated through tax foreclosure; a partial re-institutionalization of the mentally ill; and a transformation of police culture to focus as much on quality-of-life issues as on crime prevention. And all these pieces cohere into a single claim, which Nathan Glazer formalized in a recent article entitled "Fate of a World City." In the nineteen-sixties, Glazer wrote, "New York stopped trying to do well the kinds of things a city can do"—repair bridges, pick up the garbage, protect its citizens—"and started trying to do the things a city cannot do," such as redistribute income and solve "the social and personal problems of people who, for whatever reason, are engaged in self-destructive behavior." Any number of *City Journal* articles have documented both the staggering cost of maintaining New York's unique level of social services and the loss of business caused by high taxes and the failure to improve the quality of life.

But if New York shucks off a burden it never should have shouldered, who will take it up? Glazer admits that he doesn't have a very good answer to that question. A larger issue is whether cities can ever return to the golden age invoked by Glazer and others. Richard Wade, a professor of urban housing at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York and a pillar of the city's liberal establishment, flatly declares that "there's no way in which the cities will ever become self-sufficient again." The only answer, he says, is coöperation between cities and suburbs.

WHAT effect will all these theories have on the real world? Eventually, perhaps, a great deal: welfare reform was once just an idea batted around in policy circles. Much of the institute's agenda comes from experiments already under way in cities like Phoenix, Indianapolis, Jersey City, and Philadelphia—although none of them, critics point out, are comparable to New York. Perhaps that's New York's fault. "New York City is like the last dinosaur," says Sol Stern, a Manhattan Institute regular, who was the senior policy adviser to Andrew Stein when Stein was City Council president. Stern blames liberals for "clotting our institutions." But Manhattan Institute people don't feel very confident that the new mayor will be able to make much of a difference. Many of them consider Giuliani a half-hearted convert to the cause of reform; their skepticism was vindicated when he appointed loyalists and patronage beneficiaries to the upper ranks of his administration.

In any case, the Manhattan Institute's job, as Bill Hammett tirelessly points out, is to put ideas into circulation, not to intervene in the political system. In one area, though—school reform—the institute has entered the realm of action. If *City Journal* pushed the institute toward the middle, the Center for Educational Innovation has given it enough of a liberal cast to call into question the meaningfulness of ideological labels. Hammett began the Center by hiring not the sort of conservative academic who would simply deplore the plight of the public schools but Seymour Fliegel, an administrator who had worked with the reformer Deborah Meier to create small, effective alternative schools in East Harlem. In fact, everyone Hammett hired to staff the Center for Educational Innovation was a public-school educator. When school officials began asking it for help in replicating the success of Meier and Fliegel, the Center became directly involved in reform. It has helped develop alternative schools in all the boroughs except Staten Island and in parts of New Jersey. The Center's work has produced a raft of heartwarming stories for Hammett to pass on through his extensive mailing list and has lent the institute a warm philanthropic glow that thoroughly irritates some school reformers. Deborah Meier says that she finds some of the institute's positions so offensive that she has to keep reminding herself that they have nothing to do with Sy Fliegel.



In the model proposed by Fliegel and others at the Center, the Board of Education would agree to decentralize power to the local level; teachers, parents, principals, and others would work together to create new schools that meet the local needs and interests of students; and parents would then be permitted to choose whichever school they wish for their children. This "public-school choice" system depends on decentralization, a core institute principle, and on the power of markets to reward success and punish failure. But public-school choice implies a commitment to the public sector which most conservatives do not share. Hammett, who, during our interviews, kept throwing passing shots at conservatives for my benefit, said, "Our allies on the right don't share our view with regard to the public schools." Still, some of the conservatives within the institute favor the use of vouchers for public or private school. Public-school choice is a perfect instance of the ideological convergence that Hammett hopes to orchestrate.

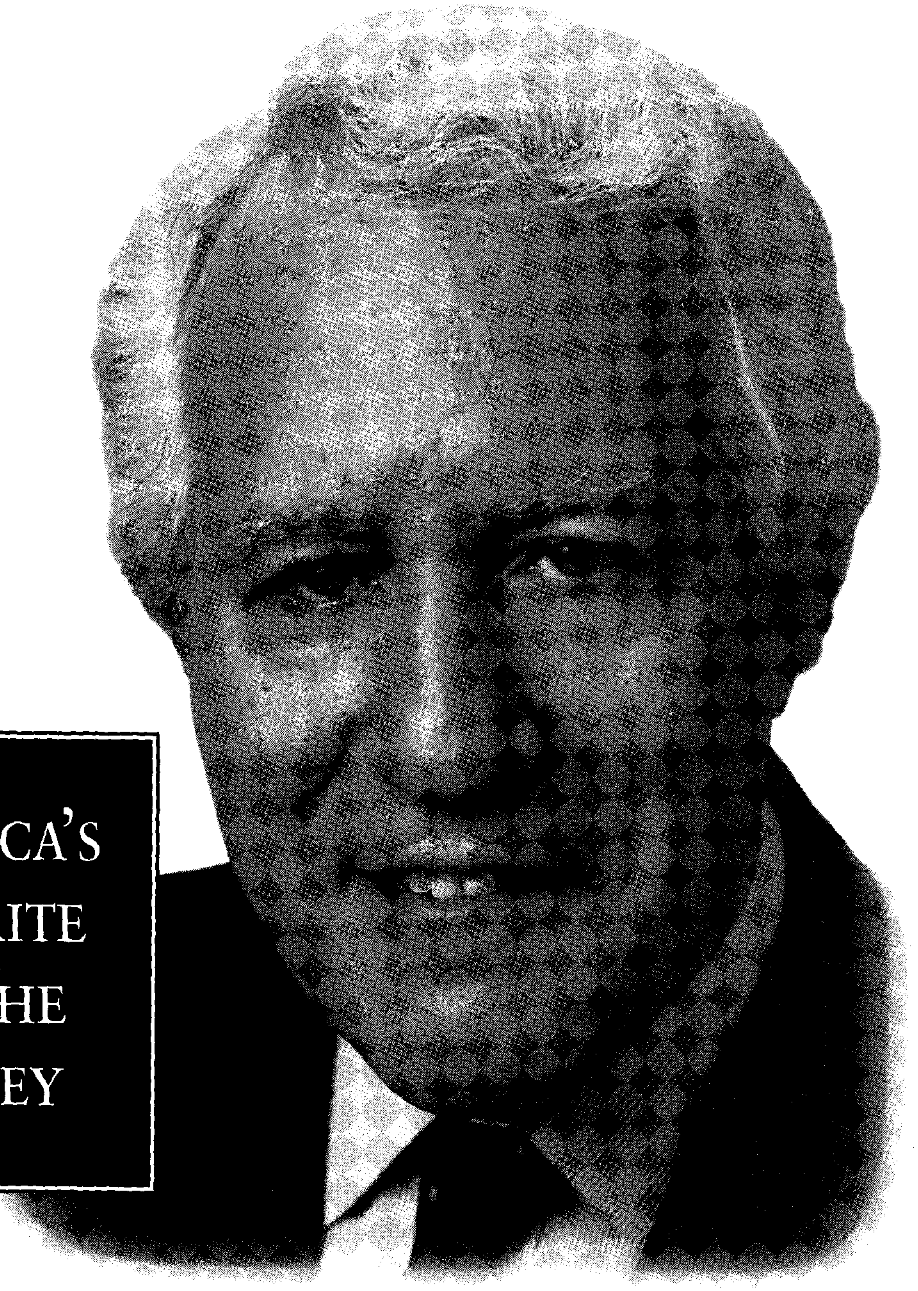
EVERY fall since 1987, the Manhattan Institute has held a gala dinner and invited a speaker to deliver the Wriston Lecture—named for Walter Wriston, the former chairman of Citicorp, who is an institute trustee. Until recently, the speakers were drawn from the ranks of famous cultural or political conservatives, and have included Milton Friedman, Rupert Murdoch, Tom Wolfe, and V. S. Naipaul. In 1992, however, the lecture was given by Johnny Ray Youngblood, a black minister and community activist, who was featured in Sam Freedman's book, "Upon This Rock." And the featured guest this past November was Edward Rendell, the Democratic mayor of Philadelphia, who is a reformer in the "reinventing government" mold.

The event, which was held at the Plaza Hotel, was an implicit testimonial to the Manhattan Institute's growing prestige. Most of the old center was there, and three of Joseph Fernandez's four chief critics on the Board of Education—known as the Gang of Four—and at least one member of the Dinkins Administration, and newspaper columnists and foundation executives and policy types. One of the very few black people present was Roy Innis, the national chairman of CORE and a right-wing fringe candidate for mayor last year. The crowd, however, consisted largely of the corporate executives and professionals whose contributions support the think tank.

Dinner was served in the Baroque Room, which was painted with charming scenes of château life. Afterward, Mayor Rendell rose to speak. He described, to a rousing reception, how he had eliminated a four-hundred-and-fifty-million-dollar deficit by facing down unions, renegotiating leases on city office space, and rooting out waste from dark corners. During his speech, he also took a number of traditional big-city-mayor positions that the institute opposes, maintaining that cities cannot balance their budgets and provide an adequate level of services without much more help from the federal government and without a more equitable system of sharing with wealthy suburbs.

Rendell also said something that the crowd disliked so much that it let him know it. After talking about the way he had stuck it to bloated municipal unions, Rendell said that he was also going after people like the eye surgeon who comes into the city twice a week to earn his fortune and returns at night to his suburban home, escaping city taxes. At that point, several dozen gentlemen in tuxedos audibly hissed. Rendell was talking about equity and shared sacrifice, but the tuxes seemed to identify with someone he was characterizing as a rich parasite. Harvey Robins, Mayor Dinkins' director of operations and a sometime friend of the institute, said that he was stunned by "that display of almost outward hostility. There was a level of contradiction in that crowd that was very disturbing to me."

It wasn't Fred Siegel or Nathan Glazer who was hissing. Yet the contradiction was not only between the crowd and the intellectual endeavor it supported but within the endeavor itself. The Manhattan Institute has moved to occupy the center, but it still contains strong elements of single-minded free-market boosterism. Over the next four years, as Mayor Giuliani tries to make good on his pledge to steer city government in a new direction, the Manhattan Institute is almost sure to become an increasingly powerful voice for reform. The unanswered question is whether the institute will insist upon the sense of equity, and of compassion for the poor, that has been missing from conservative reforms of the past. ♦



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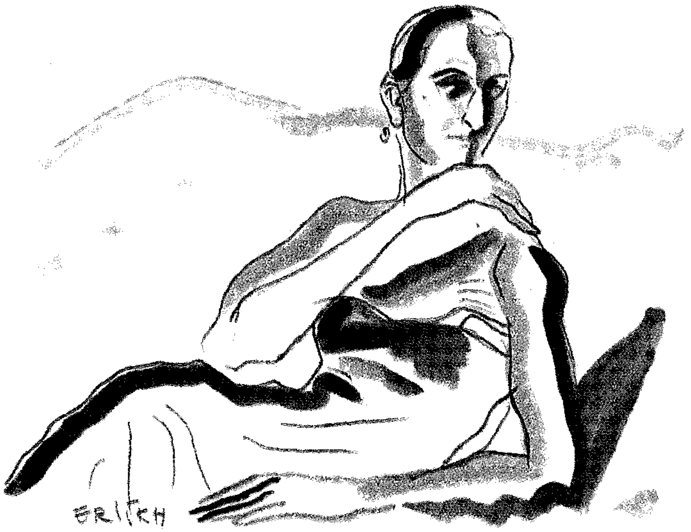
IN FASHION

SOME CLOTHES OF ONE'S OWN

Miuccia Prada was a woman of progressive ideals before she took over her family's business, and there's still a radical dream in her designs.

BY INGRID SISCHY



Prada: "I never actually decided to become a designer. Eventually, I found that I was one."

EDUARD ERIKH

FOR most of her forty-four years, the designer Miuccia Prada shuddered at the notion of working in fashion. Like lots of people, she thought of fashion as basically silly, and as a stupid, superficial way to spend much of one's time. She wanted a life with real meaning. Her family, which owned a Milan leather-goods company, had money, and she was smart and well educated. In keeping with a tradition of socially aware upper-class Italians, she joined the Communist Party in the seventies, while she was attending university in Milan, where she received a doctorate in political science. By her mid-twenties, she had risen in the ranks of the feminist section of the Party, and was spending many of her days demonstrating, leafletting, or confronting local government officials, and her nights debating or giving speeches at meetings. It's funny to think of her now as someone issuing manifestos and holding forth in public, because she's shy, and everything about her resists formulas, including her looks. She's been described as a woman one might find in a painting by Modigliani. Her face veers between beautifully plain and plainly beautiful. She has brown eyes and shoulder-length auburn hair. It wouldn't be true to say that she's slim, or that she's not; she's what old-fashioned doctors used to call "the right weight."

Even back when Prada's opinions of fashion were dismissive, she didn't dress like the rest of her crowd. She wore antique dresses, not jeans, and even a few pricier outfits; her favorites were by Yves Saint Laurent. She realized that this way of presenting herself might undercut the idea that she was serious about her politics, but the draw that such clothes had for her was greater than any concern about what others might think. "Although I was ashamed of the desire I had for these clothes, I refused to reject this part of myself," she says.

Perhaps an extra reason that Prada had shuddered at the thought of working in fashion was that such a career had been in the cards for her all along. The family business wasn't just any leather-goods company—it was Fratelli Prada, one of the great Milan stores, whose goods had helped establish Italy's reputation for craftsmanship and fine quality since the beginning of the century. In 1958, Miuccia's mother had stepped in as boss at Prada after the death of Mario Prada, the patriarch who created the business, and by the late seventies the question of Miuccia's tie to her heritage could no longer remain up in the air. She'd been helping out more and more, liked it, and found herself absorbed in the question of Prada's future. But the decision to work permanently for the firm was difficult, not just because of her take on fashion as a world of smoke and mirrors but also because of the political climate in the seventies. "Being so involved in the women's movement then, and in everything that it was trying to accomplish, I thought that making bags or shoes or dresses was the worst way I could spend my time," she says. "I was embarrassed, since most fashion had been such a nightmare for women. And I never actually *decided* to become a designer. Eventually, I found that I was one. I wanted to be something more. But I am what I am. Not everyone can be Albert Schweitzer or Karl Marx."

The fact is that Miuccia Prada has ended up doing more with accessories and with fashion than one might think possible. When she took over, in 1978, the company was in the doldrums, just plugging along. In a way, she has continued what her grandfather, Mario Prada, began when he established Fratelli Prada, in 1913. But she has done it from a completely different perspective, and with completely different results. Like Miuccia, her grandfather approached his work as though he were an explorer. He made long, arduous journeys all over the world to discover the finest materials for his opulent luggage and other luxury items, including some fancy ladies' handbags that were the epitome of elegance. Italian leather wasn't good enough for him: he used leather made in Vienna, because it was the best then. In those days, you had to be rich to afford Prada, and in the twenties and thirties Italian aristocrats and European royalty were crazy for the company's products. Classic Prada suitcases of that period were so heavy that you needed servants to carry them. The cases were fabricated from walrus skin, and they included toilet articles made of tortoiseshell, ivory, and gold. Inside, there were as many compartments as in a gentleman's dressing room, some of them packed with grooming tools that don't exist anymore. But with the Second World War that way of life disappeared. The family kept the business going by selling goods that were still of high quality but were much more mundane.

It's anybody's guess what Mario Prada might say if he were alive to see the backpack that his granddaughter created—the item that initially put life and prestige back into the business. This bag is so light that when it's empty it feels like nothing. It's black, and very practical-looking, and it doesn't always have a lining. And it's made of a material that has no snob appeal at all: nylon. The backpacks, run up on machines used for making parachutes for the Italian Army, initially appeared in the early eighties, and at first it seemed that nobody wanted them. What was hot then was anything that blatantly suggested status and money. Prada's only positive reinforcement came from the fashion vanguard. Mostly she received the kind of advice you often get when you've done something ahead of its time: people tried to persuade her to add elements that would transform her creation to fit the moment's formulas for success. They said she should put initials on the backpacks, the way Gucci does on its bags. She refused. She'd hated those initials the whole time she was growing up. After a couple of years, her instinct and conviction paid off. The backpacks and other, handheld bags started to attract more and more customers, and then she did add a metal "Prada" tag, taken from historic Prada steamer trunks. Women became so attached to the bags, carrying them day and night, everywhere and on every occasion, that they were almost like cult objects. They still are; it's just that now there are more members of the Prada-bag tribe. Constant use was exactly what Prada had in mind: we have so many things to lug around, she believes, that we need something light to carry them in; we go out straight from work, so we have to have something that functions no matter where we are; we can't be worrying that a spill or a splash will lead to ruin; we need something washable, flexible, tough, and soft.

The bags also caught the eye of the man who became Miuccia's husband and partner, Patrizio Bertelli. She got to know him at a trade fair, where she discovered that he was selling bags that looked a lot like the ones she'd designed. She hunted him down, pointed out the faults in his versions, and engineered things so that the competition would end up working with her. Soon the team of Prada and Bertelli were running a company that was producing clothes, as well as shoes and bags. "From the moment we met, we started disputing," she told me, laughing, "and we haven't stopped yet."

Recently, I spent a few days with Miuccia and her husband in Milan, and on the last of them I was partly responsible for a spat between them, because she and I had been talking so long she'd kept him waiting. When we walked into the Prada offices, it was obvious we were in the doghouse. She was about an hour late, and the looks on the faces of the young women running the reception area flashed storm warnings. From the top of the stairwell, Bertelli's voice rained down at us, and, while I couldn't understand the words, their tone was enough to make me want to scram.

He didn't give a hoot that his wife had been talking to a reporter. This is not a fellow who spends time trying to seduce the press. "Miuccia! Miuccia! You have work to do!" he scolded. And, turning to me, the other culprit, he said, "I'm going to kill you later!" "*At* or *with* dinner?" I asked, referring to plans we had for that evening. Except for quick smiles, neither Miuccia nor Patrizio allowed my presence to distract them, and therein lies a significant difference between these two and most of the fashion pack. There's none of that faking of harmony, of confidence, or of success, which is constant in the fashion business. With Prada and Bertelli, you don't have to pick your way through the hype. They don't waste energy pretending things for the sake of their public image.

It's a whole other kind of pretending that keeps the house of Prada moving—the dreaming and fantasizing that go on in Miuccia Prada's head. The first time I saw one of her runway shows, a few years ago, a friend whispered, "What an incredible interior life that woman must have." These words—surprising for a fashion show—struck home, because they seemed to pinpoint what was so riveting about what we'd seen. The clothes seemed to have something extra to them—or, rather, *in* them. They suggested that someone, not something, had caused them to be. A while later, I

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started to wear some simple Prada stuff myself: sweaters, shoes, an anorak, one of her black nylon backpacks. Immediately, they seemed familiar and intimate.

At first glance, some of Prada's work looks plain and undesigned. How it feels on the body is something else altogether; its power remains the wearer's secret. Her ability to give clothes this strong inner quality has to do with her own experience. Her imagination is a huge part of who she is, of how she does her work, and of how she gets through life. She confessed to me, "I always live a double life. There is my real life, and then there is the one I would like to live. I am never in my real life only. I am always also in my dreams, or hopes, or thinking about somebody. It's always like this for me." Where her mind travels is often, but not always, reflected in her clothes and accessories. But what can always be discerned in her creations is Miuccia Prada's world view—her view of fashion, her view of women, and even her feelings about the ways the sexes relate to each other. (She recently launched a small line of clothes and accessories for men. Most of them aren't that different from her sporty women's clothes.) Also discernible in anything by Prada is her understanding of materials, of what they can give us—or take from us. Many of her creations mix different materials, different textures, different weights, different values, different traditions, different processes, different associations.

Since the beginning, with her 1988-1989 collection for autumn-winter, her ready-to-wear shows have frequently had a schoolgirl theme. The models have been styled to look like the kind of girls that are considered trouble: the ones who are a bit too bohemian as far as their teachers and parents are concerned, who sleep with a guitar-playing dropout, or who smoke, or spend too much time on art class and not enough on math. The clothes themselves don't necessarily have misfit connotations, and they're not even particularly geared to young women, but, the way Prada imagines them worn, they're like uniforms for the slightly disenfranchised. I asked her if she'd been one of those rebellious kids she likes to create on the runway. She said, "I tried to be bad, but I couldn't be as bad as I would have liked—not as bad as the girls I really admired, and not as bad as the ones who are in my dreams."

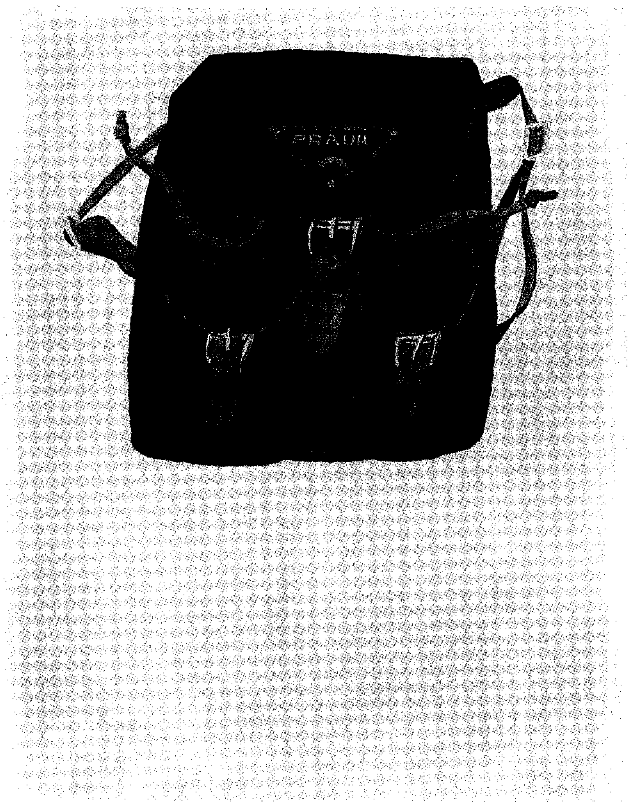
From the outside, Miuccia Prada appears to be what society expects of a woman of her standing. In many ways, she seems the epitome of the good daughter, the good wife, the good mother, the good Italian. She and her husband and their children—they have two small sons—live in the building she grew up in, and her brother and her sister (who went to work at the firm after Miuccia took over), her ex-sister-in-law, her mother, and her aunt all have apartments in the same building. Most Americans would find such an arrangement stifling, but Miuccia's designs prove that roosting at home can be a way of taking flight. She describes her working life as "exactly like school," and it's as though out of all this institutionalism she had wrung its opposite: freedom. Her designs have freedom of movement, freedom from definition, freedom from constriction.

Bohemians, avant-gardists, beatniks have been constant motifs in her designs, but she has also had fun with clothes that signal money and bombshell allure. Prada's outfits allow a woman to feel glamorous yet convey the sense that she's playing with glamour—she's not owned by it. Prada has done lunch outfits, hostess dresses, ski-bunny ensembles, and twin sets of all types, but in a way that suggests they're part of a movie, not real life. Their colors, including a citrus green that she's particularly fond of, are often as candylike as early Technicolor. Box pleats, bows, snoods, puffs, fashions of the fifties and early sixties, and a memory of the designs of Balenciaga, Courrèges, and Givenchy are just some of the elements that come into play in these clothes. Her collection for autumn and winter 1991-92 recalled Hollywood heroines—especially the kind who went on heists. Some of the outfits seemed made for cat burglars, for roles in the "Pink Panther" movies, or perhaps for Grace Kelly in "To Catch a Thief." The young Audrey Hepburn would have looked fantastic in every single outfit.

YOU can tell what kind of evening Miuccia Prada has had by the shutters in the courtyard of her house in Milan. If she's been smoking and drinking, chances are that the clothes she had on the night before will be hanging outside. And then she'll do everything that's supposed to be healthy, but you don't hear her promising that she's going to give up cigarettes or alcohol. She says that this outdoor fumigating is the best way to get rid of the smell of her sins, but I think it's also a ritual that reflects her personality. As she points out, she's a "Catho-Communist"; that is, she has experienced the moralizing of both Catholicism and Communism. She uses notions of goodness and badness as if they were the oil and vinegar without which her fashion wouldn't mix into what she wants. And she isn't afraid of living with contradictions and conflicting desires. Rather, she seems to need to express their presence. "Everybody makes a choice when he or she gets dressed," she says. "It's not true when people say, 'I don't care what I have on.' Your way of dressing is something you can go to the psychoanalyst to find out about, because there are so many personal things involved. Women, especially, have complexes when it comes to dressing, because of all the attitudes toward women—about who we are supposed to be, what's supposed to be sexy, and so on. Look at Mrs. Clinton, whom I admire. You can tell exactly what's going on. You can see that she's clever and badly dressed. Maybe she doesn't care, maybe she doesn't understand fashion, maybe she has bad advisers."

Prada's own solution to the trauma of shopping—or a trip to the closet—was to return to a phase of her life when her clothes were without all that sexist baggage. She paid a visit to the Ferrari sisters, on Via Bigli, who are Milan's most exclusive tailors of children's clothes, and had dresses and coats made to order, scaled up to her size and with "corrections," such as a bigger or smaller collar than the one that was there. She commissioned the Ferraris to create her wedding dress, too, and even though she mostly wears her own designs now, on occasion she still places an order there, and also at shops such as Cirri, in Florence, which she says makes the best sailor dresses around. You can trace her love of children's clothes in some of the details that she likes to include, such as smocking, and in the way she uses undergarments modelled on children's underwear. Her newer line, Miu Miu—which is her nickname—evokes everyone's childhood memories. But grown women, not children, are the point of Prada's work.

"Today, a designer of women's clothes has to express something that is deep enough so that it represents what a lot of women feel," she says. "Maybe that's why, in general, it's the women designers who are so successful at this." By sneaking her own experiences and her dreams into what the company manufactures—coats, pants of all kinds, sweaters, bustiers, jackets, suits, skirts, dresses, pinafores, shoes, bags—she has done something revolutionary. But her work hasn't always been recognized as such, because it isn't obviously radical.



Miuccia's breakthrough nylon backpack, which revived the esteemed Prada line.

First of all, Prada isn't cheap. Like her grandfather, Miuccia Prada goes for the best of whatever material she's using. And the products are utterly beautiful, sometimes in a new way, sometimes not. What makes her work revolutionary is the way it makes so much other fashion look outdated. Even though Prada has designed women's clothes based on men's fashion, her newer designs have rendered stale the whole idea of women wearing men's clothes. Prada herself says she has bought and worn plenty of men's clothes in her day; for a long time, that approach seemed the only alternative to clothes that made women feel bad. But the symbolism is starting to get empty. The singer k. d. lang said to me recently, "You know I have this image of being someone who wears men's clothes. But I didn't wear clothes that are associated with men because I wanted to come off like a man. It's just that there were no other kinds of clothes that had to do with confidence and authority instead of vulnerability and stereotypical sexiness. I wish there had been a third choice." Then she reported her latest discovery: "I was in a department store shopping with a friend. I went through the men's department. I went through the women's department. Then my friend brought me this beautiful jacket. I tried it on, and it fit. I said, 'Where's this from?' She replied, 'The women's department.' I said, 'You're kidding me.' I was shocked. The label was Prada."

This is how Miuccia Prada would explain what lang experienced: "In the end, there is something that goes through one person to another." But how many designers can communicate as quickly as that through their clothes? How many others are in touch with what people really want? Prada's magic is that she makes the consumer feel understood. Her clothes are driven by her own feelings and by her sharp sense of where we are in the world. "I have the sensation that happiness is forbidden," she says. "If you have it, you need to hide it. How can anyone be happy with so much terribleness around, with so many reminders of all the problems that exist? But sometimes, thank God, someone feels happy anyway, perhaps for some personal reason. The way to express this joy or sense of beauty has to be subtle. You have to keep it personal—you have to wear this richness in a manner that is private." Many of her clothes give joy in that private way, and

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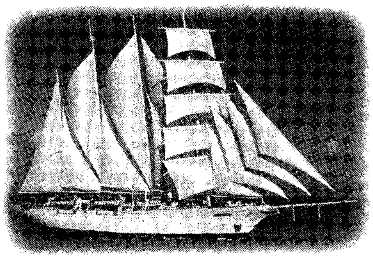

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the element of privacy may explain why Prada, which has taken off as a business, is still a kind of secret. It isn't logo fashion. During collection season, top fashion editors and stylists typically make a point of wearing the clothes of big-name designers, but at the Prada stores in Milan, which have the biggest inventory, you also see them shopping for themselves.

For all her receptivity to others, Miuccia Prada is very sure of what she does—most of the time. She still gets worked up about her 1989 autumn-and-winter collection, her third; it stank, she says. Her next collection faltered, too, and it took a while for her to find herself as a designer again. In those collections, she used conventional, Seventh Avenue solutions. The clothes were overdesigned, and it seemed that commercial considerations and self-consciousness, not the usual articulation of her unconscious, were leading her. Some of the models looked wrapped like presents, without any of Prada's characteristic humor. Her third collection included two of the least Pradaesque things she has ever done: power-suit shoulder pads and cardigans with buttons in the shape of letters that spelled out the name "Prada." That show made her miserable, but it was a lesson, too. "The whole time I was working, I hated everything," she says. "It was not me. It was a nightmare. If it's my mistake, it's O.K. In fact, I like mistakes, because mistakes are what life's about—they tell you something's alive. Yet this was something that made me crazy. For ten days, I was mad. I hated all the people around me, and I told them it was the last time others would push me to do what I didn't want."

It has been only five years since Prada began doing runway collections, but next week the company will receive the International Award from the Council of Fashion Designers of America. Prada and Bertelli should get a prize for trusting themselves as well as the intelligence of the consumer. As they've gathered more experience, they've become increasingly convinced that their company's success is based on its personal approach. Miuccia Prada is the critical link, for it is her sense of touch, her desires, her feelings, her memories, her problems, her dreams that are passed on. This creates enormous pressure, and enormous problems as the company gets bigger (there are now forty-five Prada stores worldwide, twenty of them owned by Prada, and two Miu Miu stores), but Miuccia admits that she enjoys coming in to fix things, thus reasserting her indispensability. This is a long way from dreading a career in something as trivial as fashion. Miuccia claims that her husband would be happier if it were possible to do the work without her, but that's the only thing she told me that I don't believe. Bertelli, who oversees everything, is very aware of the importance of his wife's role. He is a charming combination of opposites himself, and it's clear that they rely on each other.

The dynamic between Miuccia and Bertelli is part of the Prada recipe: it keeps the passion for the work high, it guarantees constant debate, and it clarifies the roles of both players. The two are capable of polemics that could exhaust even Miuccia's old Communist comrades. Bertelli didn't kill me that night in Milan, but their debate over dinner about the merits of different types of rare Venetian glass almost did, because I laughed so much. Out came a bottle that Miuccia had commissioned from the Pauly factory in Venice, which has produced handblown glass for hundreds of years. Then another, and another, and another, until the table was covered with bottles. The issue was which was the right color. Just when I had given up on the possibility of there ever being agreement between the two, Miuccia got up and presented the one example that satisfied them both. It was an antique piece of her grandfather's, a broken violet-colored lantern. They concurred that it was perfect.

Such hypersensitivity to details is a bond between them. So is their love of art, especially art that was truly avant-garde when it was made. Prada shops are designed in ways that are reminiscent of the art galleries of the sixties. They have that same emphasis on a clean space, on an environment that heightens perceptions. But the indirect neon lighting isn't gallerylike at all; it's a way of reconstructing that catchword of the fifties—glamour. While "glamour" may be as suspect a term today as "elegance," Prada has reinvented it in new forms. Some of her clothes allow one to have a private experience of feeling glamorous, and others provide the glamour of iconoclasm. One inspiration for this is the work of Italian filmmakers of the early sixties. (Her advertising campaign for this spring was shot at the Castello di Donnafugata, in Sicily, where Visconti filmed "The Leopard.") She credits Antonioni, for example, with influencing her first two collections. And when one looks at the clothes she presented there it's clear why: the dresses, sportswear, and slips, mostly in black and white, echo what the stylish, lonely people in his films wore. There's a line in "L'Avventura" that sums up the approach Prada took when she began. A father asks his daughter if young people going sailing still wear caps embroidered with the name of the yacht, and she replies, "It's not done anymore." And the scene in "La Notte" where the guests throw caution to the wind and jump into a swimming pool in full evening gear epitomizes Prada's boredom with the whole old idea of elegance. She knows that it's a dead issue.

Her most recent collection, which has just arrived in stores, is her most intimate statement yet, and has many of the same elements as her first collection. There is a lot of black, and sheerness, and lace-up shoes worn with ankle socks. One dress, made of black organza and trimmed with black knit—the whole thing slightly crumpled—was shown so that the black underwear beneath looked like a mirage. But there was nothing here that reminded me of anybody's movie. I couldn't help thinking she'd dreamed this collection rather than drawn it. Many of the clothes seemed to float down the runway, grounded only by the sureness of the models' feet in their lace-ups and socks or stockings. These clothes often display Prada's love of showing opposites together. There are knits, silks, cottons, linens, gauzes, leathers, viscoses, velvets, suèdes, nets, and the industrial material that represented Prada's first breakthrough: nylon. The beauty of it all was unmistakable, but it didn't conform to any formula for beauty, so some in the audience looked puzzled. But the clothes had an answer for problems that are rarely faced in fashion: "It's O.K. if you've made mistakes, if you're scared, if you're aggressive, if you're fat, if you're beautiful, if you're ugly, if you feel crazy, defensive, happy," the collection seemed to say. "Come into my arms." I watched it entranced. Especially the dresses. It was the first time in twenty years that I'd been able to picture myself wearing one. ♦

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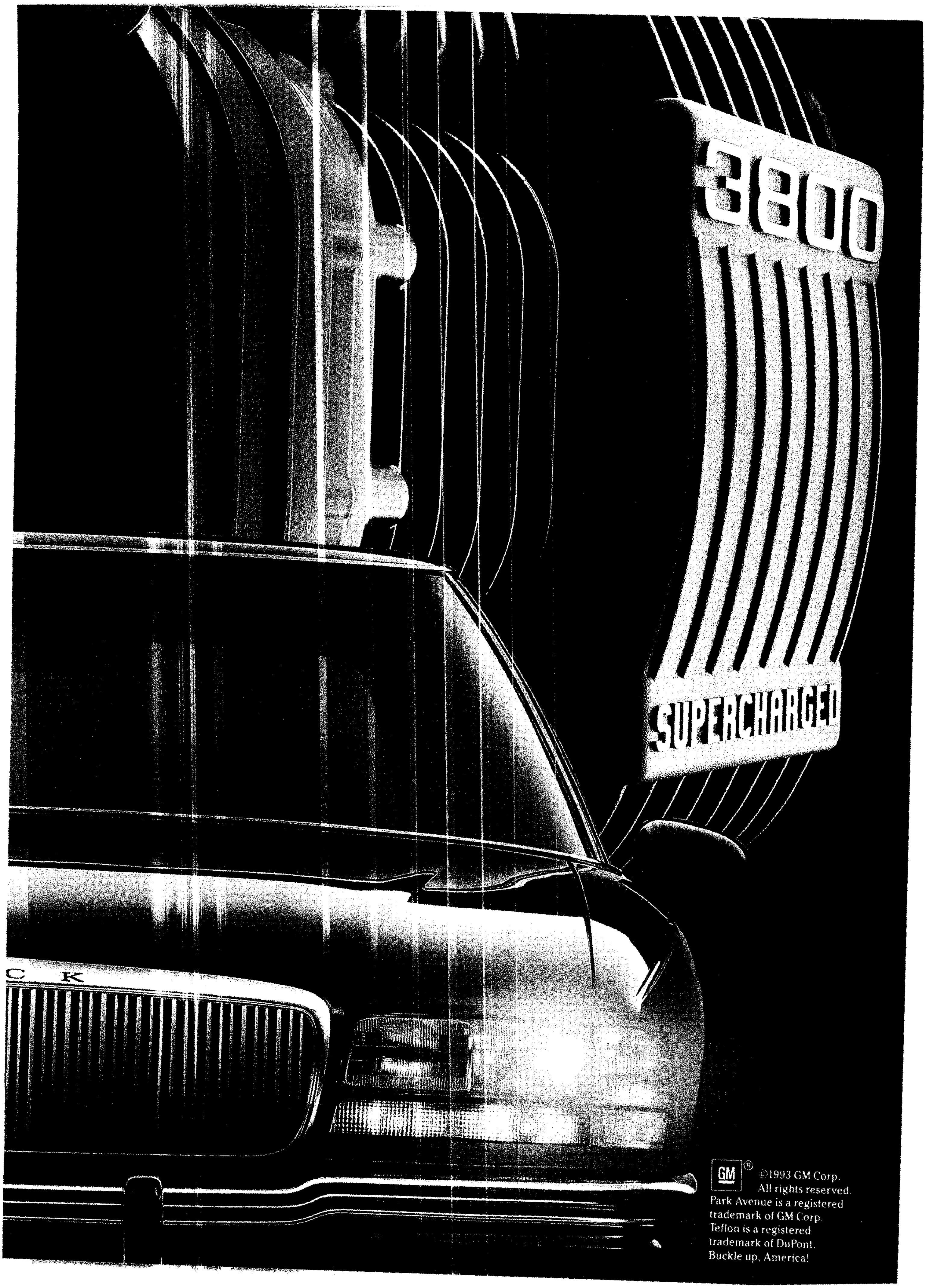
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ANNALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

JOHN MALONE: FLYING SOLO

John Malone, who engineered the merger between his TCI and Bell Atlantic, is the pioneering cable titan whom Al Gore once called Darth Vader. Despite charges of monopoly and deception, Malone has become the most powerful man in television, and has the industry and Capitol Hill wondering where he'll go next.

BY KEN AULETTA

THERE is no television set in John C. Malone's office. This seems odd, since Malone, the president and chief executive officer of Tele-Communications, Inc., is the most influential man in television. After twenty years at the helm of TCI, Malone now controls one of every four cable boxes in the country, and through TCI and Liberty Media, a programming company formerly owned by TCI, he has an interest in twenty-nine cable services, including CNN, TNT, QVC, Court TV, Black Entertainment Television, American Movie Classics, and the Discovery Channel. Malone and his company have important business links to such corporate giants as Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, Ted Turner's Turner Broadcasting System, Bill Gates' Microsoft, and A.T. & T.; they have branched out into the telephone business here and abroad, and, in addition, they are building two broadcast satellites. In all, since Malone started at TCI, in 1973, the company has acquired, invested in, or become a partner of about six hundred and fifty companies.

For all his previous success, Malone's most important deal was announced at a press conference in Manhattan on October 13, 1993, when he and Raymond W. Smith, the chairman of Bell Atlantic Corporation, said that their companies would merge, in a stock-for-stock transaction valued at thirty-three billion dollars. It was the biggest merger ever in the communications industry, giving birth to a behemoth that will reach twenty-three per cent of American homes, will be able to call upon sixty billion dollars in assets, and will rank as the sixth-largest American company. The merger increased Malone's worth—now some one billion one hundred million dollars—by about three hundred million dollars, and made him and TCI's founder, Robert Magness, major shareholders in the new company. (Malone will own one and a half per cent of the stock, Magness two and a half per cent.) This merger shifted the fundamental balance of power in the communications industry. A year ago, Malone boasted of how the cable industry would best the telephone companies. "He was captain of the cable team," says Brian Roberts, who is the president the country's fourth-largest cable system, the Comcast Corporation, and has been a partner of Malone's in various cable ventures. "But now he is straddling two industries—perhaps as captain of both teams."

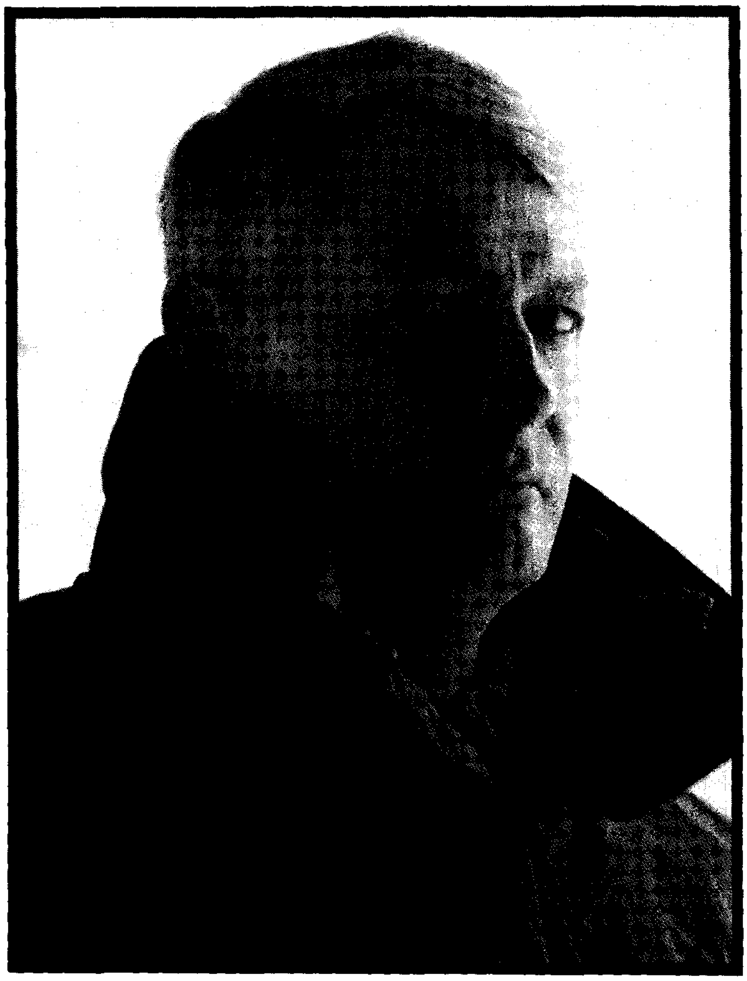
One cable programmer, in discussing the power that Malone has, notes that a number of the cable systems in America can accept only about fifteen channels—a limitation that precludes newer programming services. If TCI's cable boxes aren't available, what's left is too small an audience to support a profitable service. A cable executive who does business with TCI explains the situation this way: "Imagine that you have all these publishing houses but only one book chain in the United States. You can write the best book, but what happens if you can't get into the bookstore? John Malone is the bookstore."

Malone transacts his business from an eleventh-floor corner office in a corporate park in suburban Denver. A block of gray granite serves as his desk; cactus plants surround an L-shaped couch of gray leather. The two exterior walls are windows, and from them one sees nothing but the snow-capped Rockies. Except for a six-foot-high replica of an 1854 America's Cup sailboat that stands on a stark black marble credenza behind his desk, and a smaller carved replica of Ragtime, a sixty-four-foot motorized commuter boat built in 1929 to go from Long Island to Manhattan, which Malone restored and now uses in Maine, the office seems impersonal. There are no photographs or plaques. The only touch of whimsy is a large fake-fur gorilla dressed in a white T-shirt and a red CNN tie, which sits on a chair facing the door; Malone instructs entering visitors, "Say hello to Ray Smith."

When Malone appears on industry panels or testifies before congressional committees, he seems a frosty figure dressed in boxy suits and wearing the strained expression of a scientist or an investment banker. In Colorado, as I found during a recent week with him, he seems much more relaxed. Malone is five feet eleven and square-shouldered. He is fifty-two years old. Smooth skin, a square jaw, a long, thin, straight nose, a tight smile, and burly biceps give him the look of a retired fighter pilot. Sports shirts, slacks, and loafers are what he wears to work. He drives a gray 1989 BMW or, on snowy days, a 1990 Chevy pickup with a plow. Of late, an arthritic condition has caused him to walk with a slight limp, which makes him appear almost vulnerable. He speaks in a monotone, but there is about him an unmistakable intensity. His eyes are hazel, and they fasten on visitors. "He's so focussed," says Diane M. Grimshaw, who was Malone's secretary and administrative assistant for eighteen years and in 1992 became TCI's director of facilities. "I used to say that I could walk through his office stark naked and he wouldn't notice."

Malone does not indulge in bombast or theatrics. When he is talking, his hands usually remain jammed in his trouser pockets or wrapped around a coffee mug. He is an intense listener.

On the phone, when Ted Turner or anyone else calls him, his conversations are unhurried, near-leisurely. He proffers advice, he steadies, he calculates. He is a man of science: he has a Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in operations research, which centers on the construction of mathematical models. In his business life, he strives for pure logic, unalloyed by emotion, unswayed by friendship or sentiment. He hates political noise and what he sees as Washington's aversion to facts. Of Turner, whom he counts as a friend and a business partner, he says, "He's a very sound businessman. The only problem is that sometimes he lets emotions get the better of him."



Malone's game plan has never wavered. He wants "a piece of everyone's business."

NELSON BAKERMAN

The telephone does not ring in Malone's office—except when his wife, Leslie, calls on a line reserved for her. All other calls are screened by a lone secretary. For a man driven to succeed, Malone has an unusually brief office day—five and a half hours. He arrives at about 9 A.M., leaves at 11:30 A.M. to drive home for lunch with his wife, returns just before 2 P.M., and leaves three hours later, sometimes to meet Leslie at a local health club. To accommodate his wife, who will not fly, he bought a customized recreational vehicle two years ago—"a land yacht," he calls it, noting that it is the same size as a Greyhound bus. Twice a year (in late January and in early June), they pack their dogs—seven of them—into the vehicle, fill the tank, and drive nearly forty hours to Boothbay, Maine, where they have a vacation home. They spend several months a year there.

Malone and his TCI executives see themselves as outsiders who have successfully bucked the networks and the big boys of New York and Hollywood by helping pioneer CNN and Black Entertainment Television. To do so, they've had to be tough. And though to many Malone remains the Wicked Witch of the West (Al Gore, as a senator, referred to him as Darth Vader), admiring associates see him as both a genius and a liberated, balanced man. His mind is like a Rubik's Cube, according to Peter Barton, Liberty Media's president. "Take all these colors and six sides," Barton says. "Every square moves. It's a lot to keep track of. Now think of a whole bunch of disparate concepts as a whole bunch of unrelated colors. Now remember what's on each square. And move the cube around until the concepts fit together. That requires an extraordinary amount of memory and processing capability. John does this."

Michael Fuchs, the chairman and C.E.O. of HBO, says that, along with the investor Warren Buffett and Bill Gates, the chairman of Microsoft, Malone is one of the best businessmen in the country, and adds, "The guy is brilliant." Fuchs, who serves with Malone on the board of Turner Broadcasting and is a sometime adversary, says, "Malone knows everyone in the industry but is a personal friend of no one. It's all business." Always, Malone is guarded, acutely aware that, as cable and telephone and film and electronics and publishing and broadcasting companies continue to merge, an ally in one business or region becomes a competitor in another. "Being a C.E.O. is lonely," he says, unapologetically.

MALONE has always prided himself on going solo. One of his most vivid childhood memories is of walking or driving past cemeteries and noticing the "awful" sameness of the gravestones. "Nothing different," he says. "Nothing distinctive. Nothing unique. So I've always wanted to be different, always wanted to be unique." He and an older sister grew up in an eighteenth-century Colonial house in a blue-collar neighborhood in Milford, Connecticut. For several years, his father, who was an engineer with General Electric, commuted to a G.E. plant in Syracuse, New York, on Sunday night and did not return home until the next Saturday. Malone worshipped his father, and refers to him affectionately as "an intellectual with white socks." His mother was a world-class swimmer; she earned a master's degree in education from Temple University, and interrupted a teaching career to bring up her children. But he remembers that she was a remote figure, who did not hug her daughter or her son, because "she had some fundamental insecurities." Malone thinks of his father as a strict Calvinist, and he also recalls that he was tight with a dime and insistent on two things: a rigorous work ethic and a conviction that President Franklin D. Roosevelt was a socialist, or worse.

"I lived 'American Graffiti,' " Malone says, referring to the movie about teenagers in the early nineteen-sixties. He recalls souping up cars and "cruising the boulevard." In school, he had a nearly photographic memory, and could recite entire passages from textbooks. When the Soviet Union launched Sputnik I, in 1957, and America was frantic to reclaim the lead in space, outstanding science students were in demand. John Malone was awarded a scholarship to Hopkins Grammar School, in New Haven.

Malone commuted daily to Hopkins, where he shone. But he was torn between his blue-collar friends and his intellect. His friends often taunted him, and he got into numerous fistfights. "I was neither a preppie nor a town kid," he says. "So I put a lot of energy into athletics." He got letters in fencing, track, and soccer. "It was raw drive, not skill," he says.

In the summer of 1958, when Malone was about to enter Yale, he was at the beach with friends one day when his sister approached and asked, "Want to meet a nice girl?" The girl was Leslie Ann Evans, a fifteen-year-old neighbor. Malone recalls strolling along the beach with Leslie, and he remembers making a silent vow that they would marry. While Leslie finished high school and worked as a secretary with the Milford Police Department, he attended Yale. Science courses enthralled him, but social sciences did not. Thinking of himself as an "individualistic" conservative, he felt that his teachers and most students were "socialistic." He argued with his teachers, and he says that his grades suffered as a result. "But when I got over into engineering, of course, the answers were either right or wrong," he says. "So as soon as I got into engineering school my grades took off."

Malone graduated with a B.S. in electrical engineering, in 1963; he and Leslie were married later that year, and he went to work for A.T. & T.'s Bell Labs. Bell helped finance two master's degrees that Malone received—from Johns Hopkins, in industrial management, in 1964, and from New York University, in electrical engineering, in 1965—and his doctorate from Johns Hopkins, in 1967. A rising star, Malone may have been smarter and better paid than his peers at Bell, but he felt like one of many tombstones. "The odds were that you were going to spend your whole life writing memos and making basically no impact on anything," he recalls. He hated the timidity, the bureaucracy. Looking around, he says, he saw "guys who had been me, ten years earlier, who had basically given up." He was determined not to give up.

In 1968, Malone joined the management-consulting firm of McKinsey & Company, seeing it as "a place to retool"—as an opportunity to go from science to business. The Malones moved into a house in Weston, Connecticut. Leslie expected that John would be home as often as he had been while he was working for Bell Labs, and could join in bringing up a family. (The couple have a daughter, Tracy, and a son, Evan.) He wasn't going to be like his dad, with a home in one state and a job in another. On his first day at McKinsey, he found a note on his desk telling him that a client expected him in Montreal for lunch; he stayed in Montreal six weeks. From then on, since his clients included I.B.M., G.E., and other lofty corporations, Malone was often travelling.

While Malone was at McKinsey, he saw the marriages of colleagues dissolve. He told his wife that he would find a job requiring less travel. In 1970, he joined the General Instrument Corporation and was soon named president of its cable-TV division, Jerrold Electronics. Over the next several years, Jerrold became a dominant force in cable. Malone got to know most of the pioneers in the infant cable industry, including Steve Ross, of Warner Communications, and Bob Magness. A part-time cattle rancher and cottonseed salesman who wanted to improve television reception in rural areas, Magness owned a struggling cable system, based in Denver, that reached into twenty-three states, and also a new microwave broadcast company. In 1972, Ross tried to hire Malone to head Warner's cable operations; Magness offered him the presidency of the four-year-old TCI.

Leslie was not happy living in the East. She had a daughter who rarely saw her dad. She wanted to have family dinners at home, and to live someplace where they could keep horses. As for her husband, he recalls, "I wanted to get out of New York. I liked Steve an awful lot. I found him to be hypnotic. But I wanted to spend time with my family. I had made this commitment to my wife that we were going to have a more normal life." He and Magness envisioned loosening the stranglehold that, in Malone's words, "three channels, controlled by three guys in New York," maintained. On a typical evening in the mid-seventies, nine out of ten viewers watched CBS or NBC or ABC, and the only national cable service was HBO, which was then relatively small. Malone took a fifty-per-cent cut in pay and accepted sixty thousand dollars a year as chief executive officer of TCI. Magness would be his partner, the company

"How long did you live in Santa Fe?"

chairman. Malone's base would be Denver, which was the capital of the embryonic cable industry.

Tim Wirth, who served as a Democratic senator from Colorado and is now Counsellor of the Department of State, recalls attending a cable meeting at a Denver hotel not long after Malone arrived in town. Wirth says, "I remember Malone's determination"—to change cable regulations. "You could see his crooked little smile. He looked at you with that smile and you could tell that behind it was a tank." Malone had reason to feel determined. Soon after he agreed to join TCI, in late 1972, the stock market fell, and interest rates climbed; then, within months, oil prices soared. TCI had a hundred and thirty million dollars in debt and nineteen million in revenues, Malone recalls.

Despite his good intentions, Malone was rarely home. "Of course, I might as well have stayed in the East," he says. "I was living where the banks were—in New York and Boston—for the next five years." His mission was not to expand the business but to save it from bankruptcy. "We looked catastrophe in the face every day," Magness recalls. When he and Malone travelled to make their pitch to creditors, the two shared a motel room. Hourly employees were put on a four-day work week.

"We had to be very tough," Malone says. The backs-to-the-wall circumstances of their early years, combined with their sense of mission, and with Malone's Calvinist proclivities and Magness's cowboy nature, helped to shape a corporate culture that has by now become either entrepreneurial or ruthless, depending on one's vantage point. It was Malone and Magness against the world. "He was my board of directors," Malone says of the chairman, whom he still calls "a mentor, a father figure, a friend, a partner."

TCI achieved a breakthrough in 1977, when Malone persuaded seven insurance companies to refinance his bank debt with longer-term capital. Money was thus loosened enough to begin making modest acquisitions. More money poured in after HBO and Ted Turner made their cable-programming breakthroughs, in the late seventies, and cable-company stocks soared.

Malone had put out TCI's business fires, but he was having problems at home. Speaking of his wife, Malone sheds his reserve and becomes almost confessional. "She always felt she came second," he says. "She's always felt I haven't honored the you-come-first, the-kids-come-second, and career-comes-third commitment, and, I think, with some validity." As Malone remembers it, she told him, in the early seventies, "I thought I was marrying an engineer at Bell Labs. You were going to be home every night. We were going to have a normal middle-class life and raise the kids and take the two-week vacation and so on. And now you're off on this ego trip of building a career. You're off running companies, things that I never bought into. And that's something you gotta go do, so do it. But I'm not coming along. Goodbye, I'm leaving."

Malone had reassured her that Denver would be different, but so far it had been worse. Now he promised to change. They bought a 1904 Stanford White house on sixty-three acres in Boothbay. Then TCI acquired its first jet, and the plane allowed Malone to shorten two-day business trips to one day. In Denver, he and Leslie started going to a health club together. Diane Grimshaw, who was then Malone's assistant, says of them, "A lot of John's motivation is his wife." David E. Rapley, who runs a successful engineering firm in the Denver area and, with his wife, Sandra, is among John and Leslie Malone's few intimate friends, says, "It's difficult for him to talk about his innermost feelings. Yet he has a real soft center. He's a very analytical thinker. He's an engineer, trained in logical thinking. Facts. He's not as comfortable with emotions." Rapley says that, by contrast, "Leslie is a touchy-feely person." Yet Rapley sees Malone as totally dependent on his wife. "If, God forbid, anything happened to Leslie, it would be hard for John to make a life," he says. "It would be easier for Leslie to carry on without John. She's had to make her own life. She paints. She buys antiques." She has studied interior design. By nature, she has more gaiety.

Grimshaw, looking back on her years as Malone's assistant, observes, "I really noticed a difference in John." He began to listen more, to open up a bit, she recalls. He began to pick up Tracy and Evan after school when Leslie was busy with her own projects. He began to buy her presents. Once, he arranged for a dealer to park a red Jaguar outside their health club. When they emerged, she spotted it and said to John, "Oh, there's that car I like." And he said, "Here. Here's the keys."

Malone could have the Jaguar and the jet plane because TCI was now thriving. A dollar invested in TCI in 1975 was worth eight hundred dollars by 1989. In 1992, the company's cash flow was nearly one billion six hundred million dollars. TCI and Liberty Media are today the largest investors in cable-programming networks. (By the beginning of this year, the number of cable networks had mushroomed to ninety-two.) Malone serves as chairman of CableLabs, in Boulder, Colorado, which is the cable industry's center for decoding the future. Like many of his Japanese counterparts, and unlike the C.E.O.s of most American communications companies, Malone actually knows how to assemble, say, a radio. Because he can ask technical questions and understand the answers, and because he has real experience with customers and economics, Malone may see the future a bit more clearly than his competition does. Consequently, he has been at the forefront of technological advances, among them digital-signal compression, which will multiply by ten the number of signals in existing copper wires; the ordering of set-top boxes from General Instrument to convert these digital signals into the analog signals viewed on a normal TV set; experiments with McCaw Cellular Communications to test cellular networks; the examining of video-on-demand in the Denver area with A.T. & T. and U S West as partners; and the test-marketing of home-energy information services with Microsoft and the Pacific Gas & Electric Company. It was Malone who announced, in December of 1992, the advent of something that is now part of the language: five hundred channels in the near future.

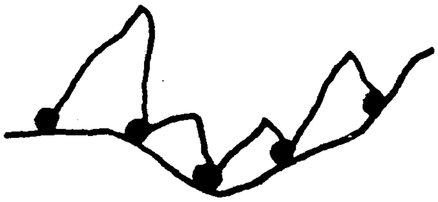
By the early nineties, Senator Howard Metzenbaum, of Ohio, among other political figures, was regularly assailing Malone as a monopolist. Last October, Malone was invited to testify before Metzenbaum's Subcommittee on Antitrust, Monopolies, and Business Rights. When he declined, saying that he would be travelling overseas, Republican and Democratic senators alike charged that he was arrogant. Some insisted that he appear. When Malone did appear, in December, he suggested that he was being treated unfairly. "If I relied solely on recent press stories to learn about TCI and the role that it plays in the entertainment-and-information industry, I would think that I was dealing with an entity combining the power of the pre-divestiture A.T. & T., I.B.M. when it was the only name in computers, and the U.S. Postal Service before anyone ever heard of U.P.S. or Federal Express," he testified. The questioning of the witness, which attracted a throng of reporters, was respectful—a spirit enhanced by Malone's adopting an agreeable pose. "By letting Bell Atlantic acquire TCI, you kind of get rid of me," he said.

Although both men would probably be uncomfortable acknowledging it, liberals like Metzenbaum and conservatives like Malone have some common ground. In many ways, Malone and TCI do and have done exactly what many liberal critics denounce American corporations for not doing. TCI thinks long-term, and not just about the next quarter. It did not fatten its dividends by skimping on research investments. Although TCI enjoys astonishing—some would say excessive—profit margins, of more than forty cents on each dollar of revenue, it withholds dividends and instead invests in new ventures. "The nub of the problems of American business is shortsightedness," Malone says. "That's a big difference between here and Germany or Japan, where there's a much longer view and a much longer cycle." He believes that most businessmen, like most politicians, are conformists, eager to follow the herd. "I have an investment mentality rather than a control mentality," Malone says. "Time Warner has a control mentality."

Malone can be both predictable and surprising. His political heroes are Ronald Reagan and Dwight Eisenhower, since he shares their notions about how big government and big taxes sap initiative. Yet, calling himself "a libertarian," he disagrees with Reagan-style conservatives who want the government to tell a woman that she may not have an abortion. Malone says he won't spoil his own children—Tracy, who has a two-year-old daughter, lives with her husband in the Denver area, and Evan is a senior at the University of Pennsylvania—by leaving them the billion-dollar fortune he has amassed. Rather, he says, his will provides them with a financial safety net, but not with enough money to rob them of the initiative to work. The bulk of the Malone estate is earmarked for the creation of a foundation whose purpose will be to invest in education that promotes "initiative and free enterprise."

He can surprise people by saying that the TV networks, which he has spent many years assaulting, are still attractive properties. He is counselling his friend Ted Turner, who would like to buy ABC or NBC. "My guess is that CBS is not long for this world," Malone says. "It will probably merge with Disney within twelve months." Barry Diller, the chairman of QVC Network, might want to acquire NBC, but, Malone thinks, government regulations might prevent this. If Turner could acquire a network and combine CNN and a network news operation, Malone guesses that Turner could realize two hundred million dollars in savings. (Whether the endeavor would improve news is another matter.) One impediment, he warned Turner, is that the government might not look kindly on such a deal, since Malone is Turner's largest shareholder and is already being accused of monopolistic practices for his proposed merger with Bell Atlantic.

Despite Malone's striving for logic, his response to certain matters seems to be emotional. He repeats the word "socialistic" like a mantra, saying that he picked it up from Rush Limbaugh, whom he applauds for a willingness "to say politically incorrect things." He uses the term "socialistic" to berate liberals, and even moderates, who support government social-welfare programs. He wants NBC, CBS, and ABC to be uprooted from New York, so they will be less insular. "There's a huge diversity of values in this country between what people in central Manhattan think of the values of our society and what people in Peoria think the values of our society are," he says. "I think Manhattan thinks that single parents are fine. I think it's a much more socialistic world there, where the government does everything for you."

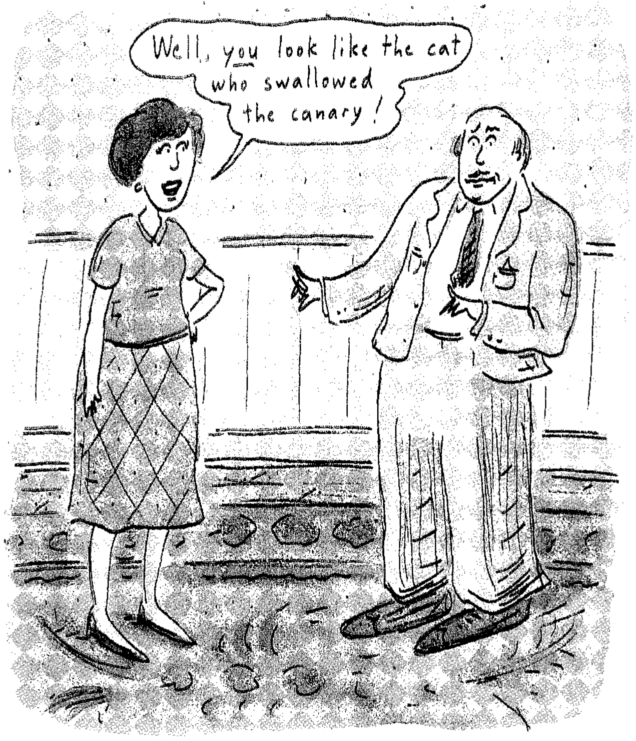


The way Malone lives is a surprise. Preferring privacy to convenience, the Malones live without servants—no cook, no driver. Their boat has no crew. "We're not socialistic," he says, this time meaning not élitist. "In Maine, we exist. We go out to the movies, or rent them. We go out to dinner by boat in Maine." When they visit their house in Boothbay in winter, they watch a lot of movies and ice-skate on their one-acre pond. In the summer in Boothbay, Malone is up at sunrise each morning and walks the dogs, feeds the fish in their pond, checks on his apple orchard and vegetable gardens, spends an hour in his office reading his E-mail and going through material sent by his Colorado office, then goes downstairs and makes tea, and while he and Leslie sip it they gaze out the tall windows and plan the day. Often, he rows two hours to the boatyard. When they spend the day on the boat, Leslie will pack a picnic lunch and the two of them will be off. Leslie has a studio, and sometimes she will spend the day there painting while he putters about in his gardens. Sometimes they will spend the day visiting antique stores. Occasionally, they will have nonfamily visitors—like the Rapleys, from Denver. Maybe once a week, the TCI plane will ferry him to a meeting in New York or elsewhere. He has two faxes, three phone lines, and a video telephone for conferences, but he tries to restrict his business to an hour a day. No one from the office calls him there, says his secretary, a cheerful red-haired woman named Martha (Marty) Flessner.

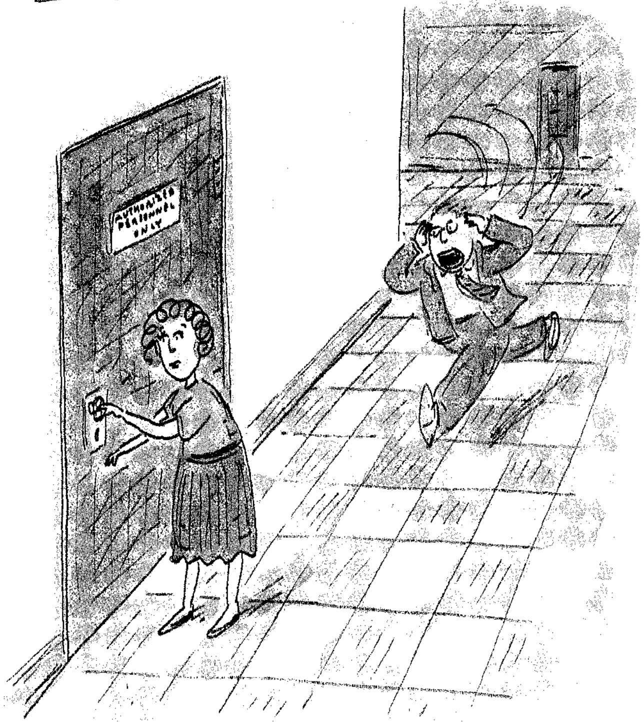
In Colorado, the Malones live in a rural area, on a hundred acres bordered by a security fence. Their driveway winds for three-eighths of a mile, leading to a comfortable but not opulent house and a barn with three horses. Though the house is only twenty minutes from the TCI offices, few who

HOW TO TELL IF A COUNTRY HAS THE BOMB

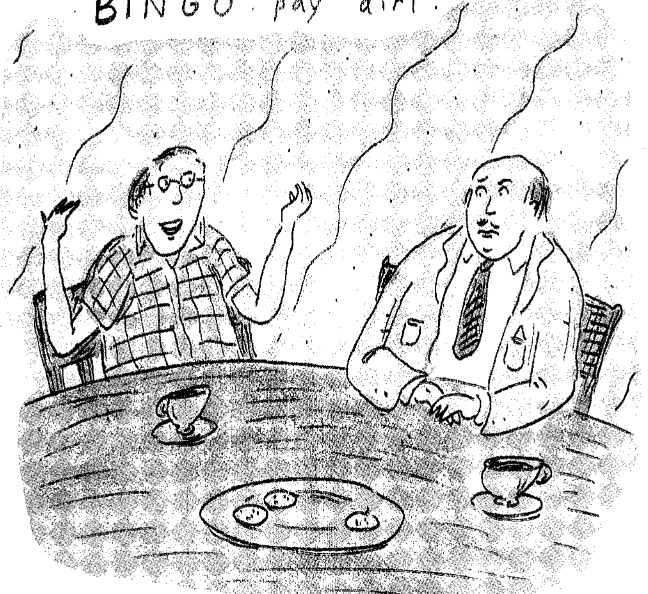
If the president, say, or the premier has a sly little smile on his face, the answer is probably yes.


Well, *you* look like the cat who swallowed the canary!

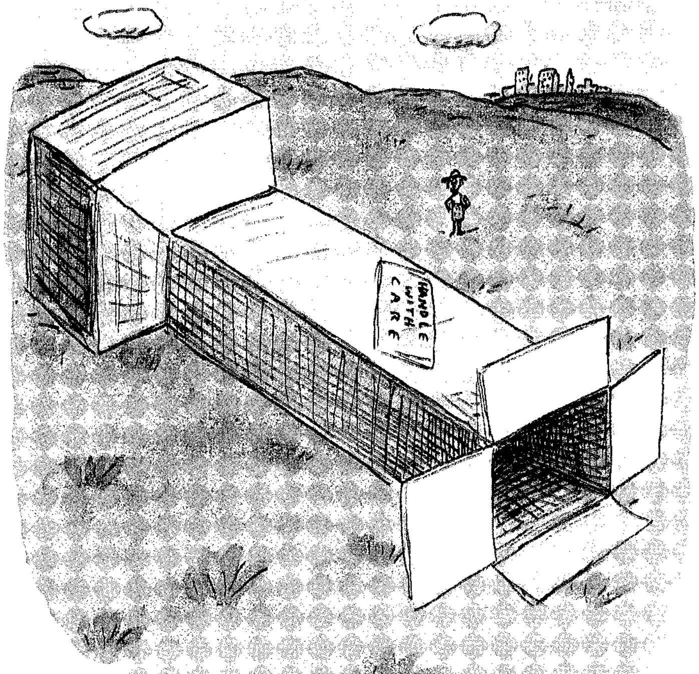
Tour a nuclear power plant and pretend to get lost. If the guide runs after you screaming "*DON'T GO IN THERE!*" you may be onto something.


AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY

Start a conversation about *your* bomb. Then say, "But *yours* is ever so much *nicer*." If he says, "No, it's not," BINGO: pay dirt.



Keep your eyes peeled for odd boxes.


HANDLE WITH CARE

work for TCI have ever visited it, for Leslie Malone insists that her husband's personal and business lives be kept separate. She won't talk to journalists. Bob Magness says, "She's a nice lady" but admits, "We don't see them a lot socially." Even Ray Smith, of Bell Atlantic, who has been negotiating the merger with Malone since June, and who will become the merged company's chairman, says he has never met Leslie.

FOR a chief executive officer, Malone has a management style that is curiously indirect. He relies on Brendan R. Clouston, the chief operating officer of TCI, to run cable systems, and on Peter Barton, the president at Liberty Media, to run programming operations. Malone himself concentrates on strategy, deal-making, technology, and cable-programming. "Brendan is basically the president of the company, though we don't call him that yet," Malone says. His spending so much time in Maine, and declining to attend most operations meetings or to give direct orders, "lets the organization grow up," he says. "I've sort of worked my way out of a job."

He has not worked his way out of the job fast enough to suit quite a few people in the cable industry and elsewhere, however. The criticism of Malone and TCI amounts essentially to three charges: that Malone is a ruthless bully, that Malone is a liar, and that Malone is a monopolist. Accounts of TCI's coarse tactics are legendary. In 1973, when TCI and city officials in Vail, Colorado, could not agree on cable rates, TCI pulled all its programming for an entire weekend, substituting on TV screens the names and home phone numbers of city officials. The city surrendered. Eight years later, in Jefferson City, Missouri, TCI threatened to let the screen go blank if the city didn't renew its franchise. Again, city officials succumbed. A cable competitor filed an antitrust lawsuit against TCI, and a jury fined Malone's company thirty-six million dollars. "Keep in mind that in those days there were no rules or laws defining what a cable franchise was," Malone says of both instances. As for Jefferson City, Malone told Congress in December that the TCI employee responsible "was discharged once TCI learned of his unauthorized actions," and he noted that in 1988 Jefferson City had renewed TCI's "nonexclusive franchise" for eleven years.

The second charge—that Malone can't be trusted—was made by Martin Davis, the chief executive officer of Paramount, in a recent *Vanity Fair* account of the battle for Paramount between Viacom and QVC. It is a charge that has also been made by some members of the cable industry. "His word is useless," the C.E.O. of one major cable rival says. "He's the best businessman I ever met. On the other hand, in terms of a character, trust, or honesty evaluation, he's one of the most dangerous men I ever met." Another cable-programming executive, who, like most Malone critics, asks to remain anonymous—in his case, because his service is one of the twenty-nine partly owned by Malone's companies—says that even after you think you've reached an agreement with Malone and his people they often reopen negotiations. "On Monday, he can say to me, 'I want to invest in this, it's great,'" this executive says. "On Wednesday, he or Peter Barton will say, 'I don't think it makes sense.'" TCI, another cable operator says, has this philosophy: "I want mine. And I want what's not yours."

Ted Turner dismisses the criticism that Malone is a greedy partner. "He's a wonderful partner, and I say that after seven years or so of having him on my board with veto power over what we do," Turner says. "He's been exemplary as a director and as a partner. He's as honest as the day is long. He's fun to be with." Malone's frequent changes of mind, his defenders explain, stem from his restless intellect. Another Malone cable partner sees Malone's mind in a somewhat different perspective, defending him as personally honorable but so intellectually adept as to be frightening. "This is a man who in a two-day period can have four hundred different transactions going on," says QVC's Barry Diller, who is a sometimes wary but always respectful partner. "As someone

GENEALOGY

Those whom you pursue
Were not the stocky dark-haired ones
(They went to the wall
Or, more likely, over the cliffs)
Or the blunt-headed heavyweights,
Lamented arrivals,
But, coming in between from marshland,
Dolichocephalics
Nondescript in the mass but able,
Hot-tempered ousters later ousted,
Conquerors, then conquered.

In old age ninety generations
Is a distance just within grasping.
What links, with whom, are you in need of?
Would it discount your unimportance
To be sure your genes
Or some of them in first editions
Had gone to earth between stone slabs,
A long barrow, a lapsing hummock
In a pasture of rank cocksfoot
Spattered with cow dung,
With the midges endlessly
Whirling over snuff-colored pools?

Or would you find it more affecting
If the carrier of those genes
That shaped your earlobes

Had been a rallier of rebels,
A raiser of hope in the dispossessed,
Who then shouted and lunged with pikes
In back yards and alleyways,
All of them ending on the gallows?

Or had landlorded it in gaiters
Over Munster acres,
Half fuddled with alcohol,
While above in a chilly bedroom
In a cursive hand
A maiden lady wrote a novel,
Long, heartfelt, and stilted,
Seen by none but a female cousin,
Barely skimmed by her?

But the tree needs pruning.
Those who are only names on gravestones
And the meanly wicked,
Unlucky or soft in the head,
Are subjects for you on your ladder
Wielding the secateurs and culling
Twigs to make a bonfire.
And the smoke elevates itself
Among the acceptable branches,
And the steel-ruled sunlight
Gray on gray picks out
The seedlings that shoot from the humus.

—FERGUS ALLEN

once said, 'He has a frictionless mind.' The next idea has no historical relevance. He forgets what he said eight minutes before. But if you make an agreement, you can count on it completely."

The third—and potentially most damaging—charge made against Malone and TCI is that they are a monopoly and use muscle, just as the robber barons of the nineteenth century did, to gain advantage. The claim received new prominence last September, when Viacom, which competes with TCI in various programming ventures, filed a lawsuit charging that Malone had violated the Clayton and Sherman Antitrust Acts by maneuvering to deny competitors access to TCI's markets. The heart of Viacom's suit is contained in this passage:

> Malone's scheme to monopolize cable television begins with his empire of cable television systems. Malone-controlled defendants Tele-Communications, Inc. ("TCI") and Liberty Media Corporation ("Liberty") have amassed local cable monopolies controlling approximately one in four of all cable households in the United States. . . . Defendants' monopoly power as cable operators, together with their expanding interests in all other aspects of the cable industry, gives them unparalleled power to dictate terms to cable television programmers, such as Viacom. Without access to Malone's cable systems, cable network programmers cannot achieve the "critical mass" of viewers needed to attract national advertising or a sufficient number of subscribers required to make the network viable. . . . As a result of Malone's unique control over this life-line, he can—and does—extract unfair and anticompetitive terms and conditions from cable programmers, including Viacom.

Among the coercive tactics alleged to have been employed by Malone, perhaps the most serious concerns his relationship with the Learning Channel. Back in 1990, this fledging cable-programming service was put up for sale. The Lifetime Television Network, which is owned by Viacom, the Hearst Corporation, and Capital Cities/ABC, stepped forward, ultimately offering thirty-nine million dollars. Sumner Redstone, the chairman of Viacom, charges that after Lifetime's owners negotiated a sale agreement they went to see Malone and he told them he planned to drop the Learning Channel from many of TCI's cable systems. As the Viacom lawsuit says, "Lifetime then withdrew its bid because of this threat." Four months later, the Discovery Channel, which is partly owned by TCI, bid thirty million dollars and ended up buying the Learning Channel.

One executive who was not a principal in the negotiations but is close to the Hearst Corporation agrees with Redstone's claim that Malone used inappropriate strong-arm tactics. But Herbert A. Granath, who oversees all cable investments for Capital Cities/ABC, and who attended a meeting of the three owners of Lifetime with Malone, offers an account of the meeting that, while critical, is closer to Malone's version. "We flew out to see John and said we were willing to turn it into a viable channel and invest more," Granath recalls. "But we wouldn't do that unless John agreed to keep it on the air a couple of years. He said he could not make that commitment." The reason he gave Granath was that many of his cable systems had already been told they "were free to take on Mind Extension University," and Granath says, "And some had. That could be true." Granath trusts Malone, he says. "I never found him untrustworthy. He tells you what he's going to do, and he does it. He's just very tough."

Being tough is not a felony, Malone says, aware that all business executives seek an advantage on behalf of their shareholders. "I play hardball," Malone admits. "But I'm very direct. And I win, frequently." What happened with the Learning Channel, he says, is that it was both a financially and a programmatically weak service at the time, and TCI, to protect itself against the possible bankruptcy of this programming service, sent a standard notification to the Learning Channel's principal owners that TCI reserved the right to stop carrying the channel. Many of TCI's local franchises never carried the Learning Channel, he says, and the Learning Channel was carrying a lot of infomercials. "We contracted to distribute Mind Extension University, which we don't own a piece of," Malone told me. When the three partners from Life-

"Then one day I woke up and just couldn't do perky anymore."

time visited, he says, he told them of his complaints about the quality of programming on the Learning Channel and of the number of local operators that had already made other choices. He also says he offered to reconsider, and to pay more if they made the programming "first class." But they decided not to go forward. When Discovery bid, he says, it was "the only bidder."

There has been no shortage of allegations made against Malone and TCI. But they all dance around the same basic question: Is TCI a monopoly? Here, too, there seems to be no definitive factual answer. Redstone says yes. Others say maybe. Malone is among those who say no. People who say that TCI is a defacto monopoly, even though it owns only one in four cable boxes, predicate the claim on their belief that no programming service could survive without access to Malone's subscribers.

Malone rejects such notions. "TCI is a large company, but we are certainly not a giant, whether compared to other telecommunications and technology firms or American companies as a whole," he testified before Congress in December. "TCI's 1992 revenues (including Liberty) were a little over three billion seven hundred million dollars. By comparison, A.T. & T. and I.B.M. each had 1992 revenues of about sixty-five billion." TCI, he said, was about a quarter the size of Time Warner, the nation's second-largest cable-system owner. It was about a third the size of each of the seven Baby Bell telephone companies. Besides, he told me, he has to operate under Federal Communications Commission guidelines. The F.C.C. has ruled that ownership of more than thirty per cent of the nation's cable boxes would threaten to become a monopoly, and the commission restricts ownership to that limit—a restriction that Malone says is reasonable.

Malone asks, "If we're cutting such a hard deal, how come Sumner Redstone is making so much money?" The real money in cable, he says, is being made by programmers like Redstone and by HBO, ESPN, USA, and, of course, Malone's Liberty Media. The chief reason that cable-subscription rates have risen sharply in recent years is that programming costs have increased between thirty and fifty per cent annually. "No one in Congress has sat down and looked at it," Malone says. The debate, he contends, is all about emotion, not facts. Malone is not wailing about his own cash flow, which is robust—partly because TCI and Liberty have bought minority interests in so many programming networks. He is simply pointing out that the balance of power belongs to programmers, because even if he wanted to he could not deny his subscribers such popular fare as HBO, MTV, Nickelodeon, and CNN. "What Redstone wants is to raise prices on his product, and I won't resist," he says.

Where does the truth lie? TCI is not a monopoly in the traditional sense. After all, TCI controls only twenty-five per cent of all cable boxes. Nor, even though Malone has fought with both Redstone and Time Warner, can he easily deny a place on his shelves to such brand names as MTV or HBO, which are owned by Redstone's Viacom and Time Warner, respectively. Malone bridles at being called "evil" for doing what he believes that most business colleagues would do. "People ascribe venality to someone who is only acting in his own interest," former Senator Tim Wirth told me. Some part of the criticism of Malone is envy.

Some part is not. Malone's company does, as he acknowledged, play hardball. It did remove HBO from some cable systems in Texas, because "we needed to get their attention," a TCI executive concedes. This executive says that TCI was losing subscribers, and felt that it needed to renegotiate its agreement with HBO. It is also true that, with the number of channels still limited, Malone does possess life-and-death power over new programmers that have yet to establish themselves.

For the cable industry, he has become the Wicked Witch. It was easy to make Malone out as such because he was mysterious. He rarely granted long interviews. He didn't linger at industry conferences with the boys but instead flew home at night to his family. He didn't advertise, or pour large sums into political campaigns, or retain high-priced public-relations handlers or lobbyists. He didn't court members of Congress or the executive branch. He played rough. He remained a loner. He maintained a naïve faith in the power of his argument, in logic, even though he had no faith in the logic of Washington or the media.

The attacks on Malone mounted. There were anonymous physical threats, Malone says. He hired security guards for Leslie and for his children. His hair, which had been almost black, turned gray. Leslie Malone became agitated. She couldn't sleep, Malone says, for she worried about her children, was enraged that her husband could be equated with Darth Vader. Leslie pressed him to leave TCI, to devote more time to the family—to strike a better balance between family and business. Last fall, when Malone couldn't shake a persistent flu, his doctor said, "Your immune system is depressed. Your health problem is stress."

WHENEVER Malone thought about Washington, he felt more stress. A Democratic government was in the White House. Malone's old nemesis Al Gore was now Vice-President. Malone respected Gore's knowledge of telecommunications but not his politics. He was no longer sure what the government would permit. Would it allow him to run both a cable system (TCI) and a programming company (Liberty Media) or would it compel him to divest? Would it allow him to make more deals? Portrayed by his foes as all-powerful, Malone actually felt powerless to stop the freight train he saw barrelling down the tracks toward him and TCI. The uncertainty altered Malone: it made him more tentative.

Malone's confidence that cable could be king was also shaken. The telephone Goliath loomed larger in his mind. He believed that the Clinton-Gore Administration would unshackle the telephone companies, hastening the day when the seven Baby Bells and A.T. & T. and the other long-distance carriers would be allowed to carry video on their wires, thus challenging cable, without unshackling cable companies so they could enter the phone business. He knew that balance sheets were not cable's friend. "The cash flow of the entire cable industry is one and a half times the size of one Baby Bell," he has said more than once. Huge amounts of capital would be required to build an information superhighway—to lay the fibre-optic wire, to invest in programming to fill five hundred-plus channels, to order the high-speed switches and set-top boxes that would let viewers call up a movie or a sporting event instantly on their video jukeboxes, or interact on their computer network. The cable industry alone didn't have the capital. Nor did it have the capital to fulfill Malone's longtime dream of opening a second front by challenging the Baby Bells in the telephone business. Critics said that Malone was too big; he thought TCI was too small. "It would be a seven- or eight-front battle for us," Malone told Metzenbaum's subcommittee in December.

"Eighteen months ago, I started telling Bob Magness and the board that I felt we had to do a strategic deal with a phone company or we were going to have serious problems long-term," Malone says. To go into the phone business alone, he felt, would risk too much of their capital. His first preference, he says, was a "strategic partnership" with A.T. & T., in which TCI could draw on A.T. & T.'s capital and technology—could remain independent while having "a big brother." There were many meetings and discussions between Malone and A.T. & T. Malone sat on the board of McCaw, the largest cellular-phone company, and was aware that that company was about to merge with A.T. & T. Together, the three of them could compete against the Baby Bells—or cable, for that matter—in providing wired or wireless services. But such a joint venture would require government approval, and that was uncertain. Besides, Malone says, A.T. & T. feared that if government deregulated the phone business too fast the Baby Bells would challenge A.T. & T.'s long-distance business before A.T. & T. was ready to challenge their local phone business.

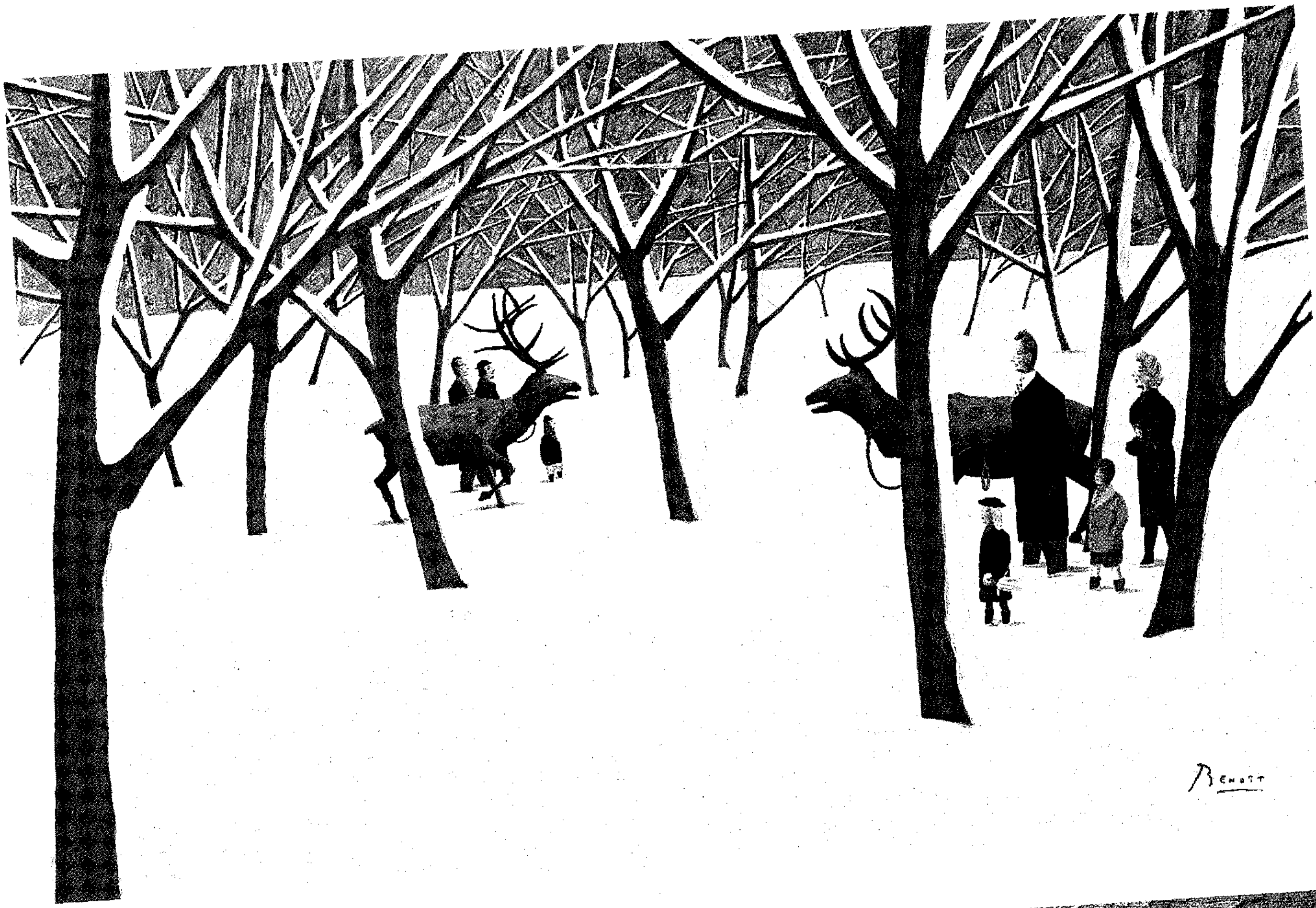
Craig McCaw, the chairman and C.E.O. of McCaw Cellular, suggested that Malone get better acquainted with Ray Smith, of Bell Atlantic, whose headquarters are in Arlington, Virginia. Malone had already met Smith while appearing on an industry panel with

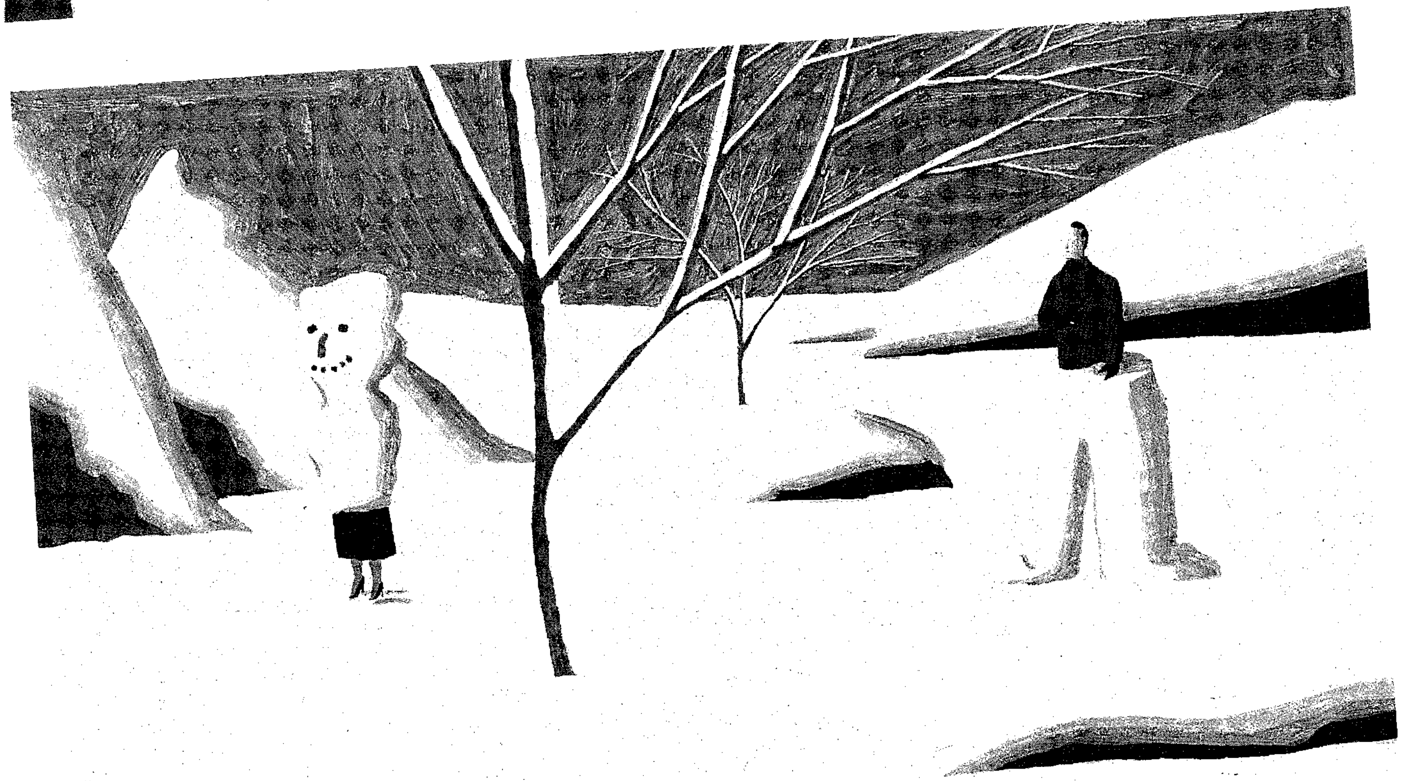
Victoria Roberts

"I had a lovely birthday—my dentist sent me a card."

ARTIST'S SKETCHBOOK · BY BENOÎT VAN INNIS

SNOW PLAY





him, and Malone had visited Bell Atlantic two years before and dined with Smith. In May of 1991, they had become partners in a satellite programming service in New Zealand. Malone admired Smith's courage in challenging, in federal court, government prohibitions that kept telephone companies out of the video business. Smith claimed that the prohibitions were tantamount to a denial of free speech, and in May of 1993 he won his case. Bell Atlantic's balance sheet impressed Malone, for in 1992 the company generated revenues of more than twelve billion dollars, had relatively little debt, and produced net income of a billion three hundred million dollars. As a C.E.O. with more than thirty-three years in a government-regulated monopoly, where customers and profits were assured, Smith impressed Malone with his entrepreneurial attitude. Malone noted that Bell Atlantic was running the kind of slim headquarters organization he himself favored. "It was clear to both of us that we saw the world similarly," Malone says.

There was a bonus with Smith, and it was one that mattered to Malone: Smith was a skilled politician. He was on a first-name basis with leading Washington figures. He liked dealing with the press. He was used to having a public-relations employee sit in during press interviews—something that Malone didn't do.

Unbeknownst to Malone at the time, Smith, too, was searching for a partner. He had four reasons to target TCI as his top choice. The first, he said recently in his Arlington office, was that "it had national coverage," and the second was that it was situated in a number of major markets. "Then there was John Malone," he went on. "John's understanding of the business, and his skill at handling programming—that was the third aspect of it." The fourth: TCI had "very good cash flows." Smith phoned Malone and asked if he might pay him a visit.

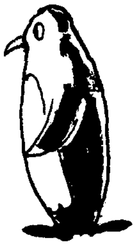
They met in TCI's boardroom on June 16, 1993. Instead of getting right to the point, which was that he wanted to propose a partnership between the two companies, Smith recalls, he started by talking about their common vision—about how, as he is fond of saying, the superhighway means that "your computer will speak, your TV will listen, and your telephone will show you pictures." Smith spoke of how he was leading a cultural revolution at Bell Atlantic, encouraging managers to be more nimble—to be more like TCI. And in the future they, like TCI, would plow profits back into expanding his business. He spoke of how each of them imagined cable and telephone slugging it out, and joked about their sparring sessions on various panels. Then he got serious: "Do you think you'll be able to do this yourself?"

"Of course," Malone had said.

"But then he quickly retreated," Smith goes on. "He made it clear he could learn everything, but it would be a lot faster if he had someone who understood switching, regulation, operating systems, and service requirements—the stuff that we do very well." Smith then suggested a strategic partnership.

"The chemistry with Ray was terrific," Malone says. "The other guys are old school. There is no way companies like U S West would walk away from dividends. Ray was clearly a cat of a different color. Very entrepreneurial. He's a delightful guy. He's not the stiff three-piece suit."

He also plays hardball, just as Malone does. Although Smith was equally impressed with Malone, he says, he wanted to leave Malone with one other message, which was, he says, "If we did not succeed in partnering with TCI, we were going to partner with someone else." The meeting ended with Smith saying, "I'll write you a letter tomorrow."



Within days, Malone received a four-page letter. It asked that he consider three options: Bell Atlantic could make a small minority investment in TCI, much as U S West did when it invested two billion five hundred million in Time Warner; or it could take a larger minority stake, supplying more capital but without gaining control; or, finally, the two companies could merge. Smith also sent a confidentiality agreement, which both men would sign.

Malone was interested. It was the right thing for TCI to take Option No. 3 and merge, he felt. And it was the right thing for Leslie and John Malone. He didn't want to run all or part of a large organization. Earlier in the year when I.B.M. had been scouting for a new C.E.O., its search committee visited Malone and asked if he might consider becoming C.E.O. of the computer giant. "I'm at the point in my life where I don't want to run a large organization," he recalls telling the committee. "I'm not good at it. I'm a builder. I like to invent." Leslie Malone desperately wanted her husband out of the public eye. He says that at one point he imagined taking Liberty Media and riding off into the sunset. "Les was real happy with that," he says. "She likes Peter." Peter Barton, an ebullient man of forty-two, is one of the few TCI employees who have been inside either of the Malone homes. Malone envisioned staying on as the chairman of Liberty Media, with Barton running it.

Still, though Malone liked that scheme, he was uncertain what to do about the rest of TCI. As it happened, two previously scheduled business conferences—a meeting of the National Cable Television Association in Lenox, Massachusetts, on July 8th, followed by an annual C.E.O. retreat in Sun Valley, Idaho—helped crystallize Malone's thoughts. The twelve-seat TCI Canadair Challenger jet picked him up in Maine and stopped in Lenox, where he stayed just half a day. Ranking cable executives were there with their spouses. "I'm feeling like a left thumb, wondering why I'm there," Malone recalls. At 5 P.M., he headed for Sun Valley, pulled out a yellow legal pad, and began making notes. At the top of page 1 he wrote, "John and Leslie's goals and objectives," and then he listed six: (1) to reduce stress; (2) to have more fun; (3) to insure a safe and liquid personal investment portfolio; (4) to generate predictable income to fund their life style; (5) to reduce government and legal and media exposure by taking himself out of the public eye; (6) to honor commitments and moral obligations to his family and business associates.

These goals, in turn, led to a set of conclusions, which Malone also jotted down: (1) to retire from TCI; (2) to reduce outside public board memberships from eleven to four; (3) to remain chairman and controlling shareholder in Liberty and stay as chairman of

CableLabs; (4) to remain on the Turner board, because it was fun, and because it was an important programming investment for TCI and would allow him "to maintain my relationships with the old gang"; (5) to "get the government off our back"; (6) to generate predictable income by deferring TCI compensation payments, which, with stock dividends, should produce sufficient cash to maintain their life style; (7) to say nothing publicly about the contemplated change until Bob Magness was comfortable.

Magness, who is sixty-nine and spends less and less time in the office, had been kept abreast of Malone's search for a partner. The next step was to bring Magness and Smith together. A dinner was arranged in New York on July 12th. Sharon and Bob Magness, Malone, Brendan Clouston, and TCI's outside attorney, Jerome Kern, of Baker & Botts, would greet Smith and a few of his key executives at an apartment that TCI maintains in Manhattan. The purpose of the evening was to see whether Magness was as comfortable with Smith and Bell Atlantic as Malone was. Smith acted like the suitor he was. Before going to dinner, he talked about the benefits of joining the two companies into one giant, and he made it clear, in his gentle way, that if they were to merge he wanted Liberty to be part of the deal. Smith knew he needed programs to fill his cornucopia of digitalized channels. He wanted Liberty. He wanted TCI people. He wanted the same kind of entrepreneurial culture that Magness and Malone had helped inspire. Most of all, he wanted Malone, his brain, and his cachet on Wall Street.

They walked to a restaurant, and there the discussion revolved around the state of the communications industry. When the two groups parted, after nearly five hours, Bob Magness was sold on Smith and Bell Atlantic. "I was very comfortable with them," Magness recalls. Malone was comfortable with Bell Atlantic, yet uncomfortable with the thought that he might not be able to go off with Liberty. "They were getting into a business they didn't know well," he later said of Bell Atlantic, "and they were afraid I'd outsmart them and they would buy obsolete stuff and I'd keep the good stuff. This is where my reputation hurt me."

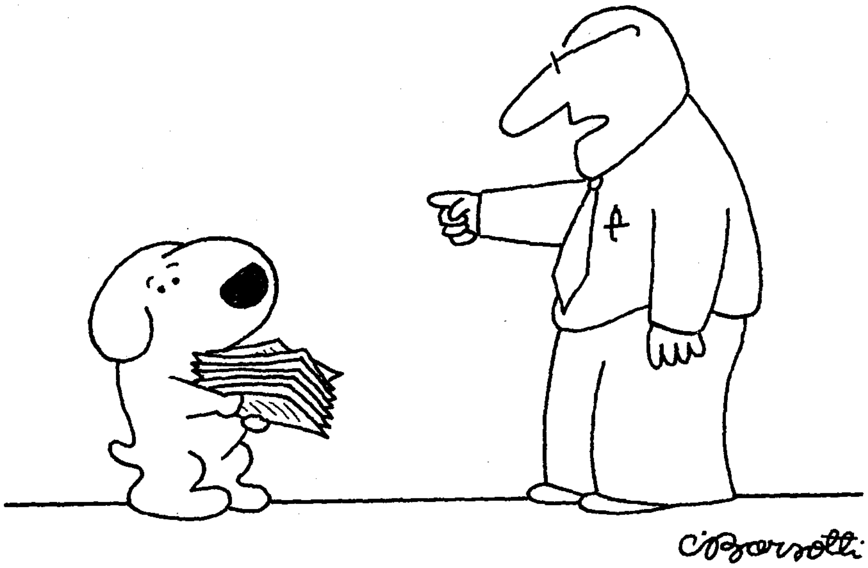
A few days after the dinner, Malone telephoned Smith. "I agree with you—we should merge the two companies," Smith recalls Malone saying. "And that means Liberty and TCI?"

"Right."

Smith wasn't sure what role Malone wanted to play in the merged company. He was sure that he, not Malone, would be the C.E.O. "I felt that I was the better person to run the combined company," he says. "Having the larger company. Having the experience in regulation." And he knew that Malone had no interest in being C.E.O. So he wasn't surprised when Malone said on the phone, "You should run the whole thing."

With the Bell Atlantic deal sliding along nicely, Malone knew that it would complicate, if not sabotage, an earlier deal he had made to own twenty-two per cent of QVC and to be partners with Barry Diller and Ralph and Brian Roberts, the father and son who are, respectively, chairman and president of Comcast. When they announced their partnership, in December of 1992, they had said that Diller would do more than build a home-shopping service. He would become cable television's programming maestro for the superhighway. He and Malone and Comcast together would bend the future to cable's will. Now three impediments had presented themselves. First, Malone had been told in midsummer that Diller wanted to make an offer to acquire Paramount, and Malone now says that that offer conflicted with discussions he had been holding which were meant to facilitate a link between Turner Broadcasting and Paramount. Second, if the merger with Bell Atlantic went forward, Malone would be unilaterally altering the nature of his partnership with Diller and the Robertses. And, finally, he would be aligning TCI with a phone company that wanted to enter the cable business and would be poised to challenge Comcast, since Comcast had cable boxes throughout much of Bell Atlantic's region.

Mindful of his confidentiality agreement, and of the possibility of subsequent shareholder suits, Malone said nothing to Diller or to the Robertses. When Diller proposed to the QVC board members that they make an unsolicited bid for Paramount, Malone recused himself, he has stated in a sworn deposition, telling Diller and the board that "it was inappropriate for me to put myself in a position where TCI's discussions, ongoing discussions, with Paramount would be in conflict with something that QVC and the QVC board might want to do." Malone says that he had discussions with Martin Davis, of Paramount, for at least three years about Paramount's merging with Turner Broadcasting. This idea sank over "social issues," Malone says. "Ted's attitude was 'Maybe I can let Marty stick around a couple of years before I get rid of him.' And Marty wanted Ted to sell advertising." As late as last April, Malone now says, he received a proposal from Davis to link but not merge Paramount



"File!"

and Turner and Liberty. Each would own a piece of each other but retain its own independence. Davis and Turner would continue to run their own empires, and Liberty would own more than twenty per cent of Paramount to go along with its nearly twenty-five-per-cent ownership of Turner.

Malone says that he still had hopes of pulling off such a deal when Diller proposed going after Paramount. Since Malone continually explores possible deals, he was still talking to Davis through the summer. Malone said in his deposition that Davis had repeatedly asked whether Diller was coming after him and demanded that Malone put Diller "on a leash."

There have been conflicting interpretations of Malone's behavior. Friends maintain that he was trying to strike a delicate balance between his partners and his own shareholders, since he honestly believed that his earlier proposal for Paramount was better than Diller's. He did recuse himself—that is, until Davis chose Viacom as a partner, in September. Detractors say that Malone's behavior in regard to Paramount is one more example of why he can't be trusted. Whichever camp one falls into, this much is certain: even when Malone recused himself, he had a strategy. He was guessing that the threat from Diller might drive Davis into Malone's arms. To some observers, it seemed to be another case of "I want mine. And I want what's not yours."

Unlike the discussions with Turner, or the subsequent negotiations between Sumner Redstone and Martin Davis as they have been recounted in the voluminous depositions that all sides gave, the so-called social issues between Malone and Smith—such as who would be C.E.O., which company name would be listed first, and what titles would be conferred—were quickly resolved that summer. They agreed that Smith would run the company, that the TCI name would not be part of the new entity, and that Malone would serve as a kind of consultant, based in Denver, and would shepherd strategy, programming, and technology. "Conceptually, we were aligned," Malone says. "The real issue came down to price."

"Oops! Time for my gun lesson."

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On August 30th, Smith and his team flew to Portland, Maine, to meet Malone and his team and take Malone's boat out to sea. Once on board, they wrestled much of the day over price. One of the issues was Malone and Magness's insistence that they be paid a ten-per-cent premium for their Class B stock. Malone maintained that this was not unusual. "Bob feels strongly that he is giving up control and ought to get a premium," he told Smith. Bell Atlantic was asking Malone and Magness to agree not to sell their stock for five years, and was asking Malone to sign a non-compete clause preventing him from working elsewhere in the industry for a number of years. Malone and Magness wanted something in return.

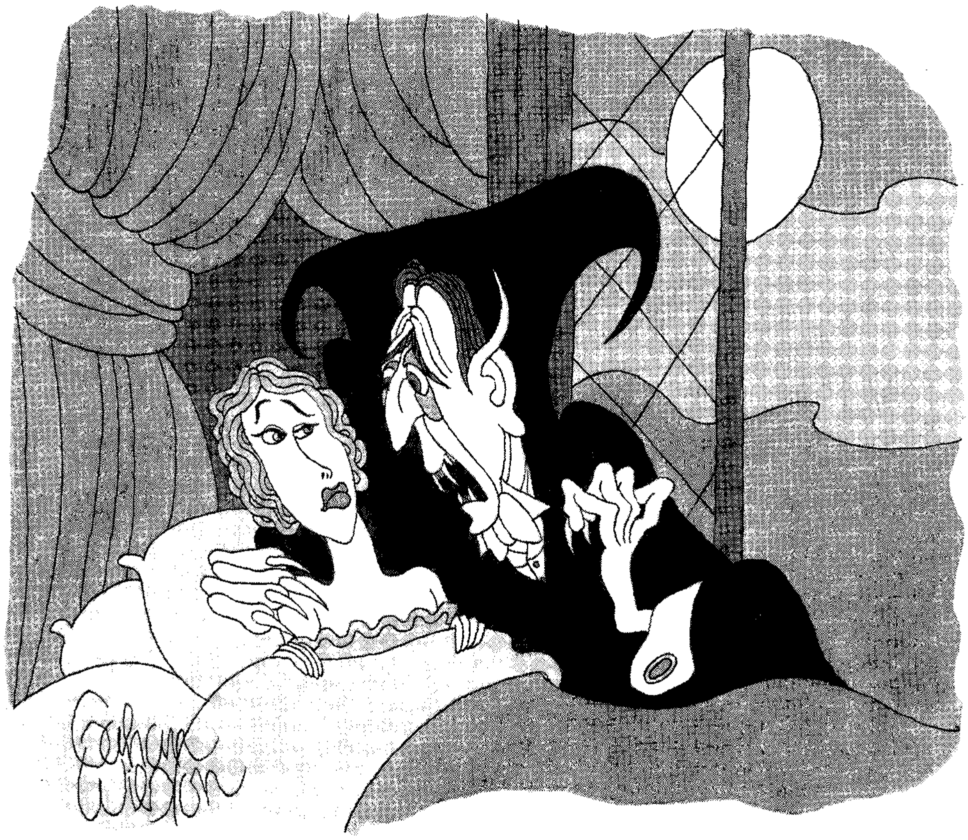
No definitive agreement was reached. But in coming weeks Smith embraced the ten-per-cent premium as fair, and, since this had always been seen as a stock-for-stock swap, they agreed on a method for determining the dollar value of TCI's shares. However, as is often true with Malone, until a letter of intent was signed he kept tinkering. On the morning of October 12th, the day before the marriage was publicly announced, both parties met at the Manhattan law office of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom, which was representing Bell Atlantic. They negotiated until 4:30 P.M., Smith recalls. They haggled over price—how to value each of the components of the deal, including Liberty Media's programming investments.

"I was ready to walk away," Smith says. When they finally settled these matters and were in separate rooms drafting statements to be included in a press release distributed the next day, they had forgotten one important detail. Smith remembers that Malone entered the room to say, "My guys tell me I have to have a title."

"What do you want?" Smith asked.

"They say 'vice-chairman.' "

"O.K.," Smith said. To Smith, this was the ultimate demonstration that "neither of us has position ego." He says,



"And now may I bite your neck?"

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"We don't care about where we sit or about titles." Malone doesn't care about titles, others say; he cares about control. At TCI, Magness had the title, and Malone had control.

THOUGH Senator Metzenbaum and others reacted with alarm to the prospect of Malone at the nerve center of a behemoth that now reached into twenty-three per cent of American homes, the reaction from the Clinton Administration was muted. The emerging consensus in Washington is that as long as the wires are open to any programmer the merger encourages competition by provoking warfare between cable and telephone companies, and thus inviting two or more wires into most homes.

Malone and Smith remain uncertain about what the federal regulatory bodies will do. They know they face a wait of about a year before the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission and the Justice Department rule on the merger. When Malone spoke to TCI employees at a videotaped question-and-answer session right after the October merger announcement, he himself did not sound like an employee. "Keep in mind, for those of you who feel bought or traded, that the two largest shareholders of the new Bell Atlantic are going to be the two largest shareholders of Liberty and TCI—that's Bob Magness and me," he said. "In a tug of war, I'd bet on our managers." And he made it clear: "TCI did not sell out. We got married."

In January, when Malone spoke to his managers at a Denver hotel, he guessed that there was "a seventy per cent likelihood that the deal happens." Why so low a percentage? Because, he has said since, the government might object to the marriage, or insist that the new company shed assets that Bell Atlantic would not want to shed. Perhaps, he says now, the complexity of the details to be settled between the two parties—as of last week, a definitive merger agreement had yet to be signed—could prompt one or both to back away. If the deal should collapse—and Malone does not believe that this will happen—he is currently telling his managers that he would "give up on the idea of a similar merger." Instead, TCI would go back to Square One and look for a strategic partner, with Bell Atlantic being his first choice. If that happened, Malone might slip off with Peter Barton and Liberty Media.

And what of Malone's former partners Comcast and QVC? They were unhappy, because the proposed merger with Bell Atlantic would mean that the Federal Trade Commission would require Liberty to divest itself of its stake in QVC—if, that is, the home-shopping service should capture Paramount. To stay in the bidding contest with Viacom, Diller and Comcast scurried to find new investors. If Diller loses Paramount, Malone will remain as their partner—unless the federal government should veto that arrangement. No matter what happens, Malone's present, or former, partners are apprehensive. Overnight, Comcast went from being a partner of Malone's to being a competitor. "I'm not saying John shouldn't have done the deal," a cable rival says. "But there was no emotion. This guy is a machine."

Comcast's president, Brian Roberts, who brokered the original partnership between Diller and Malone, still professes admiration for Malone's abilities, but he does not camouflage some hurt. "I was disappointed on several levels," he said. "John was not up-front that he was talking to a phone company and might sell his company. Yet we were in the middle of a ten-billion-dollar deal for Paramount that relied heavily on him. You can argue that Bell Atlantic was a thirty-three-billion-dollar deal and he didn't want to risk it by telling us. But he could have indicated that something was up without revealing any details. Deep in my heart, I say he didn't trust us—or perhaps anyone—enough to take a chance." Malone and Smith maintain that if Malone had told Diller and Roberts earlier than October 12th, which is when Malone called them, it would have violated Securities and Exchange Commission regulations. "We didn't make the deal till the last minute," Smith says. "John had to swallow the discomfort. . . . We had agreed to that. I had a partner who was totally shocked"—Grupo Iusacell, a Mexican cellular-telephone company, in which Bell Atlantic had announced just two days before that it had acquired a billion-dollar stake. Malone says that he has committed himself not just to carrying on his cable systems the two basic QVC channels but to opening the systems up to more when QVC expands; he also says that if Diller should need investment dollars to sweeten his bid for Paramount he was prepared to consider advancing him five hundred million dollars as part of a joint venture they could do overseas.

The fraying partnership between Malone, Roberts, and Diller may be a harbinger of the mercenary nature of business alliances in an era when communications companies are scrambling to converge. Malone says he feels regret that his relationship with Brian and Ralph Roberts has been altered. "We have great relations with Comcast," he says. "We have been partners in many deals together." He once invited the Robertses on his boat—an unusual move for Malone. Of Diller, Malone says, "He's probably the most professional businessman I ever met. He blends sensitivity and toughness in a way that you rarely find. I regret that I have not been able to be of counsel to Barry to the degree I had hoped."

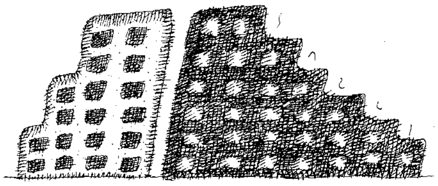
But Malone is not looking back. In the future, he says, business relationships will get more complicated. "Virtually everybody who is not on your team or in your company will be both a friend and a competitor," he observes. "We're partners with Time Warner on a whole bunch of stuff. Yet we are also competitors." He competes with NBC but also has business dealings with it. He will seek to invest not in any one Hollywood studio but in several, he says, so as not to be just a renter of software. "If you have cross-investment, it increases the likelihood that your purposes are aligned," he explains. He does not want to own a studio outright. "It's like racing horses or owning a ball team," Malone says of the movie business. "There's too much ego in it to be a business."

Today, TCI has an equity stake in Turner Broadcasting, which has bought two small, independent Hollywood studios and the M-G-M library; it has a joint pay-per-view venture with Rupert Murdoch's Twentieth Century Fox; Malone retains a relationship with Diller if QVC should fail to take over Paramount; and he has been talking to both Sony and MCA about joint investments. Malone's game plan has never wavered. He wants "a piece of everyone's business," he says.

Malone believes that companies have no permanent allies, only permanent interests. Such an approach both enhances Malone's flexibility and constricts it. Alliances rest on business logic, not personal loyalty or shared passions. There is no fellow-businessman, Malone says, with whom he'd rather kick off his shoes and strategize than Rupert Murdoch. Yet so aware is he that Murdoch is also a competitor—his Fox network competes with Malone's cable channels, and his Sky Television news service challenges CNN—that, Malone says, he is always a bit guarded; everyone in business is both friend and enemy, no one is either.

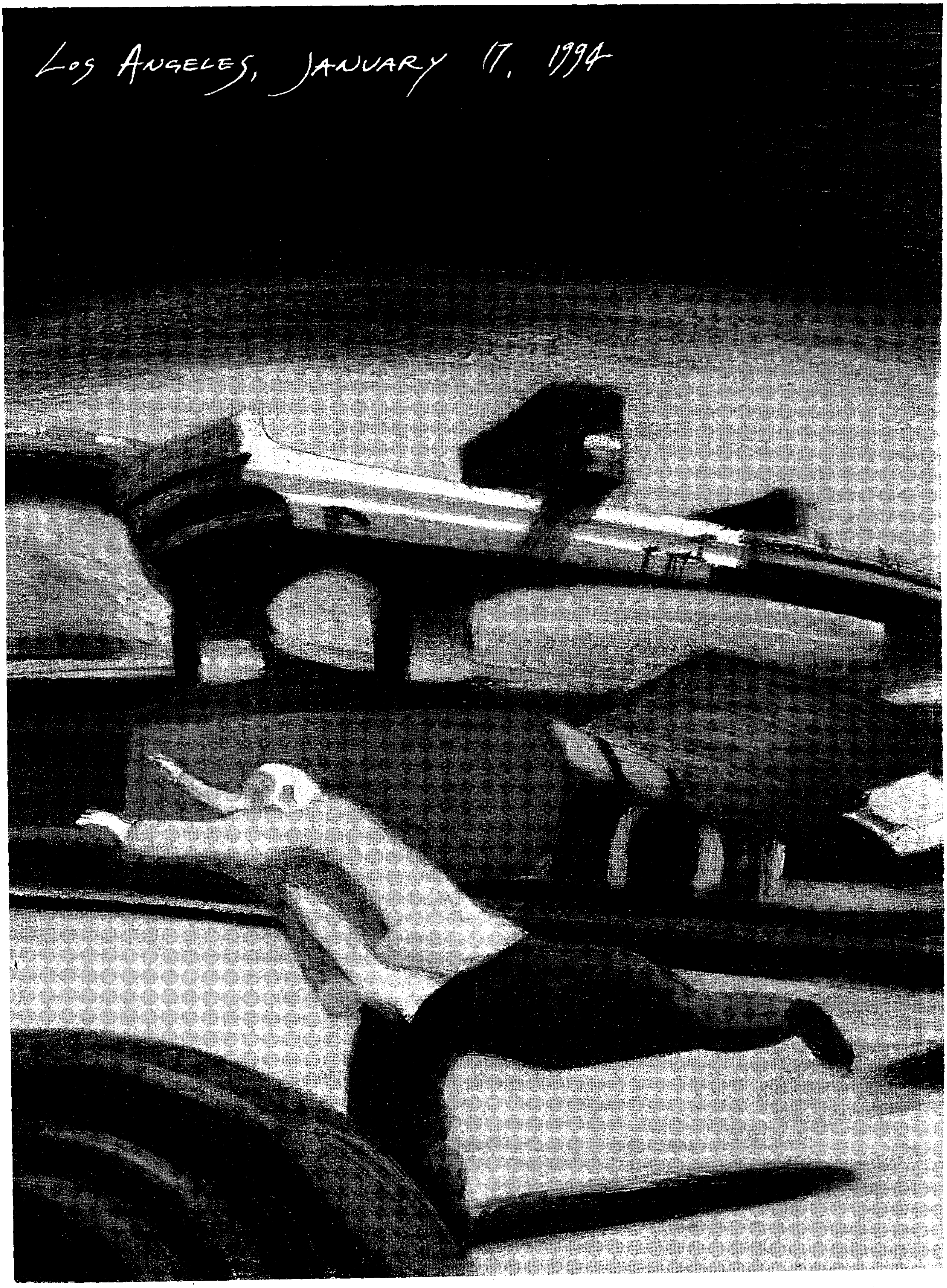
Because Malone's brains and his cunning are widely admired, speculation in the business and media worlds has it that Malone must know something denied everyone else. Maybe he has figured out that the superhighway and its five hundred-plus channels will not be successful. Maybe he has discovered that the cable industry is a dinosaur. Maybe Malone made a deal with the government. Maybe Malone is keeping Liberty or other assets. Or maybe, *Business Week* suggested, it will just turn out that Malone will "quickly start to chafe at his secondary role."

But maybe, this time, the complicated Malone is simply following his heart, not his head. Maybe, for once, he's following human, not business, logic. Maybe he's doing what the Wall Street mutual-fund legend Peter Lynch did in 1990, at the age of forty-six, which was to step down in order to spend time with his family. Maybe one can take Malone at his word when he says that although he had multiple motives for merging with Bell Atlantic, his overriding motive had nothing to do with business. He was putting his wife and family first. He's not about to retire, he says, explaining, "I want to spend more time with my wife, my children, and my granddaughter in order to participate in their lives. To a very large degree, this Bell Atlantic deal is a conclusion to me, personally. Ray can make the speeches; he's better at it than I am, and he likes to do it. I can spend a lot more time with Les and the kids, and still be sufficiently involved to keep my intellect and my creative side occupied. The Promised Land."

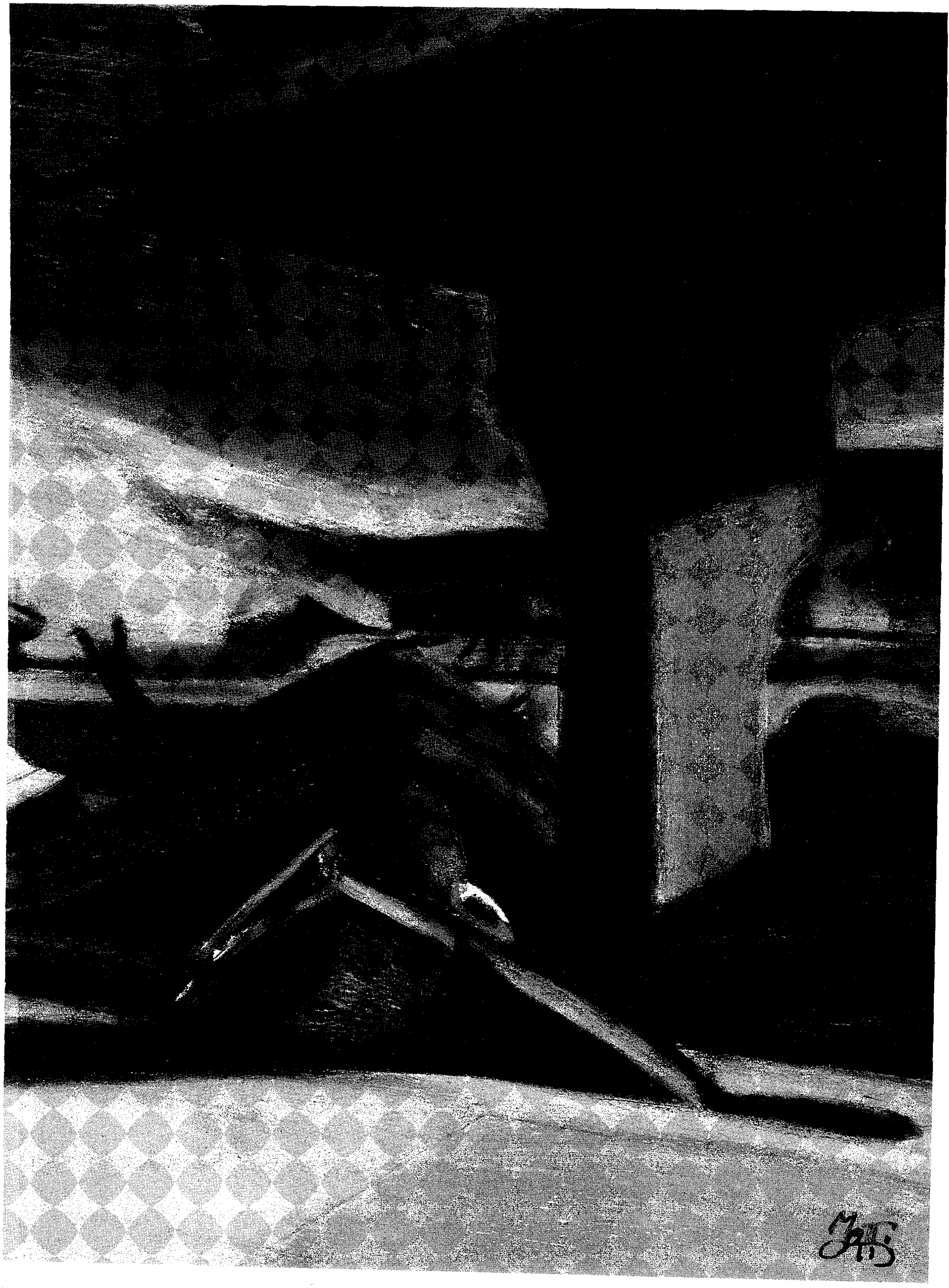


What, he was asked, would he say to someone who thought the tough-guy Malone sounded henpecked? Malone did not shift uncomfortably in his office chair, did not move his hands, did not act as if he were under assault. His eyes never flickered from the questioner as he responded, "Call it what you will. It's not that she is beating on me all the time. It's something I feel." The feeling, he continued, was that he had not honored "the deal I made when I married her." He was also being selfish, he said. "When I'm in Maine, I'm a different person. I smile. I sleep well. I'm more fun."

Whatever Malone's personal motives may be, it's commonly assumed that Ray Smith will not be lonely running the merged TCI-Bell Atlantic, for many people believe that the fish has swallowed the whale. Soon after the merger, Brian Roberts marvelled of Malone, "Think how smart he is. Here's a guy whose company the federal government was thinking of breaking up on one day because he was too powerful. And the next day he has tripled the size of his business and the government appears to like it." Since Malone will be fifty-three in March, people can't believe that he is truly stepping down. Tim Wirth says of Malone's biggest deal, "I wonder who this guy from Bell Atlantic is. He's in for a ride." ♦



Los Angeles, January 17, 1994



PERSONAL HISTORY

DYING: AN UPDATE

The author's odyssey through a year of confronting AIDS.

BY HAROLD BRODKEY

THE ambulance people came, and I whispered to them that I could not walk or sit up. Or breathe. They went down for a gurney and for oxygen. Breathing through a tube in my nose and motionless and sheeted on a gurney, I was wheeled through our apartment and into the elevator and across the lobby, past the doorman, onto the sidewalk, into the air briefly, and then into the ambulance. This is how my life ended. And my dying began.

Ellen says I was heroic and completely in charge, and that I surprised her by agreeing *agreeably* to being treated for *Pneumocystis* rather than asking for sedation and being allowed to die. She says she thought then that we would die together, both of us—commit suicide simultaneously—in a few months, when everything was in order. But she didn't want me to leave her now, not this abruptly. Most of us who know Ellen know her as a fine-boned tyrant who looks a bit like a small Garbo. Her hair is gray, and she has never had a face-lift. She is of interest physically still—neatly formed and stylized, like the stopper of an expensive perfume bottle. She is incredibly willful, and she is my human credential. People think she is good-looking and trustworthy and sensible, whatever they think of me. It seems clear from how Barry—my doctor, Barry Hartman—and the harried nurses acted that they saw her that way. They all trusted her judgment and her will, not mine. I remember wanting not to be an exploitative fool in her eyes by asking her to nurse me through a terminal disease, and one with a sexual stigma. I wondered if she would despise me. I knew a woman once who'd had a good marriage, unmistakably so, within limits, and whose husband, a clever banker, fell ill and impressed everyone with how hard he fought to be himself again, to get well again. That woman once said in my hearing, "I wish he would give up." His struggle went on so long, and so dominated everything, that it was killing her. And he was hardly alive except as a will to struggle.

At home, over the weekend, I had got so sick that I could not find a balance point in the gusts of horrendous sensation. It was strange how the sickness kept getting worse by the hour, with a kind of muffled rapidity. I'd never been ill that way. Again and again, it thudded to a level of horrendousness, consolidated that, and then thuddingly sank to a worse level still. Nothing was stopping the progress of strangulation. I had kept putting on a front for Ellen until, in a kind of extreme inward silence, nothing was working.

But when Barry said I had AIDS, I said I didn't believe him. He said, "Believe me." Then Ellen said something, asked him something about what was going to happen, and he said that after the *Pneumocystis* cleared up I had the possibility of a few years of life.

I said, "But it will be embarrassing." The stigma. Incontinence. (Would I have to wear a diaper?) Blindness. He said the good years were quite good, were livable.

I don't want to be defensively middle-class about this, but it was a middle-class decision I made, nothing glorious, to try to go ahead and have AIDS, live with AIDS for a while, and not die with the *Pneumocystis* then.

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ELLEN says that when we were first told, on a Monday, she sat in the one chair in the hospital room. To prove that she is actually remembering in the Brodkey mode, according to Brodkey theories and method, she says that Barry leaned against the windowsill with his arms folded while he told us I had AIDS. And that the weather was warm. And that I was strangely jovial and reasonable. I remember Barry propping himself with one arm on the sill and then refolding his arms and saying, "You *have* AIDS," and holding his pose and staring at me.

In the confused, muddied velocities of my mind was an editorial sense that this was wrong, that this was an ill-judged element in the story of my life. I felt too conceited to have this death. I was illogical, fevered, but my mind still moved as if it were a rational mind—the mind, everyone's mind, is forever unstill, is a continuous restlessness like light, even in sleep, when the light is inside and not outside the skull. I took inside me the first stirrings of acknowledgment of AIDS, not with the arching consciousness with which I try to write fiction—I didn't feel that isolation—but with a different sense of aloneness. And maybe I felt the wretchedness in Ellen. Maybe I was sensitive to what I had, so to speak, done to her now.

And then I saw it differently: after all, death—and AIDS—are a commonplace. "Big deal," I said. That didn't lighten anyone's face. "Jesus Christ," I said. "What a mess." Barry said something about tranquillizers and counselling to help with the shock and despair, the natural grief. "I'm O.K.," I said and went on grandly, "Look, it's only death. It's not like losing your hair or all your money. I don't have to live with this."

I wanted to make them laugh. I wanted them to admire me, it's true, but I also wanted Ellen to stop that inward shaking, and I was afraid to say "Christ, what have I done?" or "Look what's happened to me" or "It's all my fault." I have an odd cowardice toward grief. I would just as soon suffer without it. The two of them were watching me, ready to sympathize and comfort. Ellen turned to Barry, who was disapproving. Or worried. "We can help when the despair hits; we have drugs," he told her.

But, you see, a traumatized child as I was once, long ago, and one who recovers, as I did, has a wall between him and pain and despair, between himself and grief, between himself and beshitting himself. That's the measure for me—handling the whole weight of my life in relation to polite bowels. The rest is madness, rage, humiliation.

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To be honest, the effort of writing, and then my age, and the oppressive suffocation of the illness itself, and my sad conviction of the *important* validity of my ideas (of what my work presents), and my hapless defense of that work had so tired me that I was relieved by the thought of death. But I also wanted to make a defiant gesture at AIDS. So it became a matter of contrary style. The disease and its coercions (like all coercions) were contemptible. I figured that later on I would make meek friends with it while it killed me, but not just yet.

And I felt that if I had AIDS Ellen had the right, perhaps the duty, to leave me; my having that disease suspended all contracts and emotions—it was beyond sacrament and marriage. It represented a new state, in which, in a sense, we did not exist. What we were had been dissolved as if by radiation or the action of an acid. Perhaps the *sacrament* remained, but it was between her and her beliefs now: care wasn't, in my view, owed to me anymore. I wasn't me, for one thing. And she had suffered enough.

I am peculiarly suited to catastrophe, because of my notions and beliefs; I am accustomed to reconstituting myself in the middle of catastrophe. And my ideas, my language, support me in the face of disastrous horror over and over. I am like a cockroach, perhaps—with AIDS, with vanity, with a cowardice much greater than that of Kafka's Samsa. Ellen is not like that. She has an identity, of the real, familied sort. A good many people, including me, care about her. Her children are never alone in the world, and that sometimes irks them. She is gullible toward bad news in a rebelliously saintly way that tends to irritate me. Her rebelliousness extends throughout her existence—it is toward God and death, toward society, toward men. How she reconciles that with the propriety she manifests day in and day out is beyond me. I tell her that we are cowards and artists and are in flight and are and have to be awful people to get our work done. She ignores me when I talk about art or life that way. She does and does not believe what I say or what I believe. "I cannot live like that" is what she says. I mean, I can see, often, the degree of *enlistment* in her being with me.

I have a number of kinds of humility, but I am arrogant. I am semifamous, and I see what I see. I examine everything that is put in front of me—like a jeweller. I am a Jew from the Middle West, not at all like a New York Jew. I am so arrogant that I believe a formulation only if it has the smell or lift of inspiration. I have never, since childhood, really expected to be comforted.

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In the twentieth century, the arts have not pictured the reality of actual sex and actual love as they are in life, on actual days, over actual time—they are seen as, oh, socialist bliss, or as paradise before the nightmare strikes, or as nonexistent (Joyce and Beckett, the sexual yet sexless Irishmen), or as obsession and victimization (Freud and Proust), or as some idyll of heat and whatnot. Hemingway was dominated by sexual terror, but how popular he was. For me, the greatest portrayer of high-art sexlessness was Balanchine, because he captured and beautified so physically the rage and longing and the attempts to escape loneliness. And then there is the sexlessness of Eliot—one should remember that Lawrence was driven out of England while dry Eliot came to be idolized. And perhaps rightly. Love and sex, after all, are unwise: Look at me. The foolish nature of sexual love is there in front of you, always. Civic duty, ambition, even personal freedom are opposed to it. We tend to think that popular art is sexual, and perhaps in a way it is—it does indicate that the act takes place, and you can see in it why the inclusion of sexuality and emotion in your life can lead to a horrific response. But it is not as sexual as Jon Vickers' singing, for instance. He caused embarrassment in American audiences as Sinatra never did. He caused embarrassment in the way Billie Holiday did, in night clubs, from the sheer authenticity of the sexual-emotional event.

What happens in a competitive city, among people who are clever imitators, students, really (more or less sedulous apes), is that the paucity of such authenticity leads to the constant manufacture of what you might call a sore-nerved and sensitive counterfeit sex. Counterfeit sex is a large part of what New York is. People here rebel by means of a jealous promiscuity—a jealously restless sense of the happiness of others.

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I WILL say peevishly that I was never accepted as gay by anyone, including someone who lived with me and claimed to be a lover. I did think that, for me, no decent relations were possible with women back then: the women were rotten with their self-expectation, their notions of femininity, their guilt. And I saw no male role I could play that was acceptable to me. Toward the end of my experience of homosexuality, before I met Ellen, I underwent the most outrageous banishment to a role of sheer, domineering, hated and worshipped masculinity. It was then that I was infected by one person I was interested in. He later left his lover and came to New York to die in my care and Ellen's.

AIDS had never been one of our fears; it was not one of my secret dreads. I am so shaken by what has occurred that I have lost much of the discipline about memory that I had before I was told I had AIDS. Ellen and I were in Berlin in November and December of 1992, and then we went on to Venice, and some people—everyone, really—said I was too thin. Neither Ellen nor I responded when a blackish spot appeared on my right cheek. We thought it was my macrobiotic diet or the effort of not being overcome by literary politics and leftover sexual jealousies, even while my sexual nature died away, a kind of public modesty. I had written a novel in one year, a novel I liked, that I was proud of, and I had expected such a labor to kill me. During that year, I was slow-moving, easily tired, and subject to small bouts of giddiness. I was underexercised, too thin, and wobbly at times. And I was strained past my level of strength by the difference in reputation and treatment I received in various countries—great artist here, fool there, major writer, minor fake, villain, virtuoso, jerk, hero.

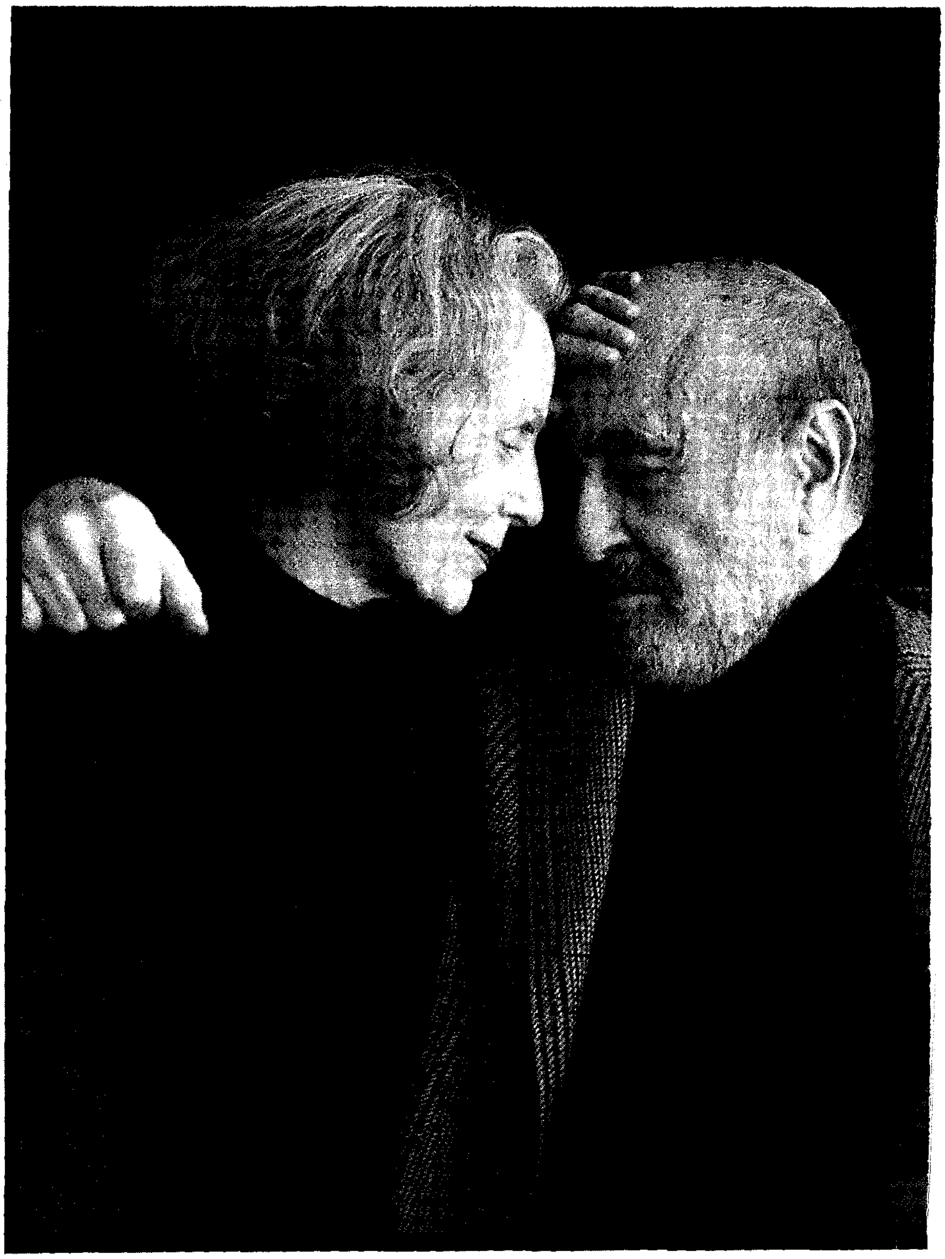
I THINK it was that the future had vanished for me, had become a soft, deadened wall. In the beginning, when Barry told me flat-out that I had AIDS, I didn't yet feel it, although I also saw that denial was futile. Barry was not even remotely real to me at that point. He was merely a conductor, a sort of lightning rod of medical error. I still didn't believe he was a good doctor—that came a short time later. The framework of the self wasn't changed by the words, the general feeling of its being my body and its having been my body all my life didn't dissolve, as it would in a few days. I had no sense of gestating my death.

Ellen says that she hung back and expected me to be violent, psychically, and to want death immediately once I accepted the diagnosis. Well, that was true. But I was also afraid of death, of my own final silence. And I was ashamed toward her, and angry at her. She does not steadily believe that I love her—it is one of her least endearing traits to expect proof at unreasonable intervals. And what is love? My measure of it is that I should have died to spare her. Her measure is for us to be together longer.

For the next two weeks, the world and all other issues were omitted. We were two people alone in a hospital room. We allowed no visitors, and the internes weren't interested in my case. (Barry explained that AIDS is medically boring now, and I did not have a recondite opportunistic infection, but the most common one.) Ellen and I had two weeks of near-silence with each other and my increasing helplessness. I tended to tangle the I.V. and misplace the oxygen tube.

As I started to say earlier, one of the first things that becomes distorted and then fades when you learn you're fatally ill is a sensible interest in the future. The moments become extraordinarily dimensionless—not without value but flat and a great deal emptier. Time becomes very confusing, perhaps uninteresting, pedestrian. But my not caring if I lived or died hurt Ellen. And I was grateful that I could indulge my cowardice toward death in terms of living for her.

She got back to the hospital after four horrible hours of night at home in our apartment alone, racked by waking nightmare. She arrived soon after it got light and had a bed for herself moved into my hospital room.



EILEEN TRAVELL

She said, in an averted way, "I want more time with you."

And I said, from within my flattened world, "You're nuts. It isn't that much fun to live. Now. And you know it." I sighed. "But if that's what you want . . ."

"I do," she said.

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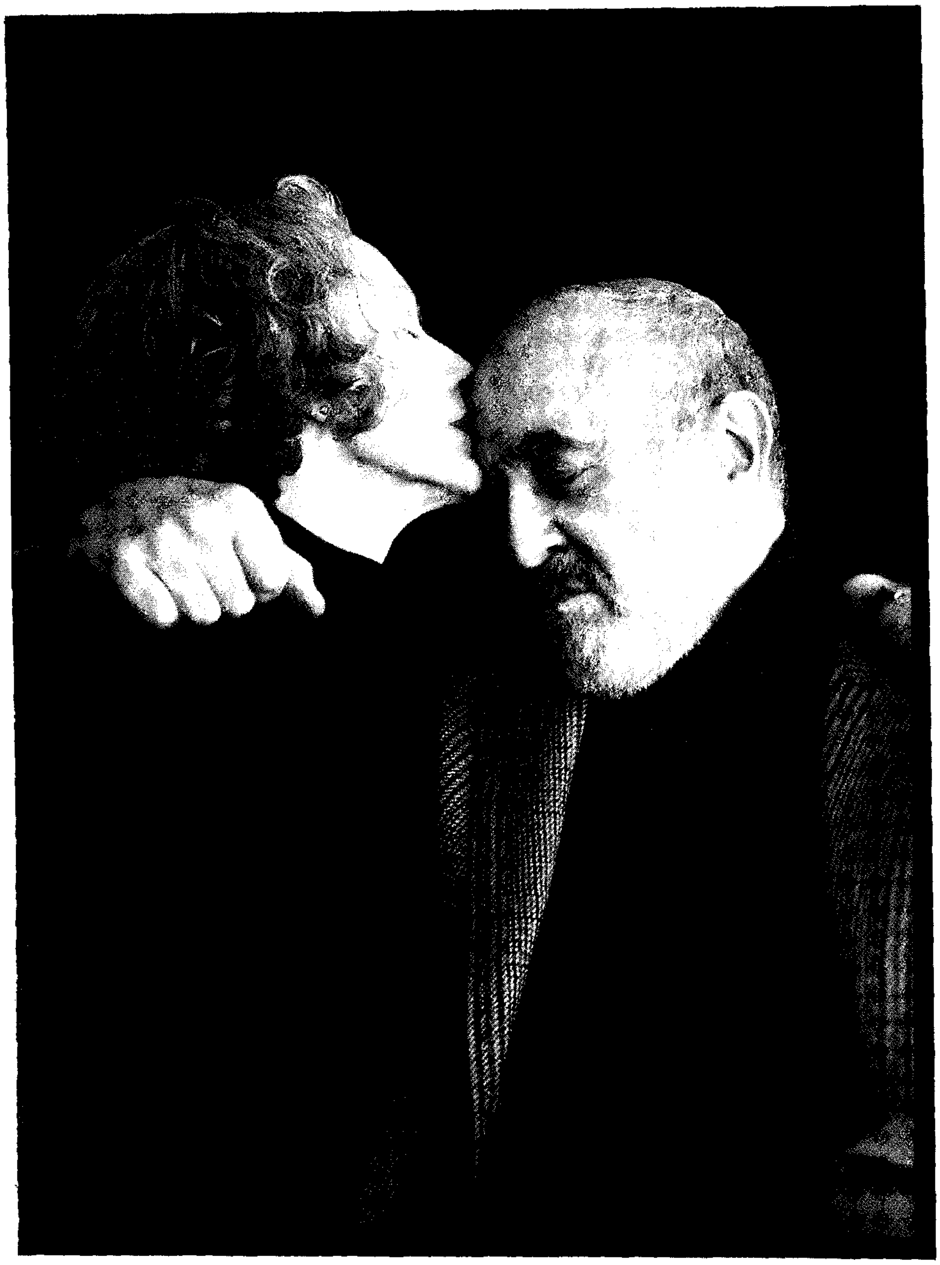
OPTIMISM. Hopefulness. Our American fondness for advertising and our dependence on it culturally to represent not what works or is worth preserving but what is worth our working *for*—this, in lieu of tradition, is nervously life-giving, a form of freedom. It is also a madness of sorts, a dream-taunted avidity for the future to replace a sense of history.

But it is the basis of America—the forward-looking thing. We-will-create-a-nation, and we will have gardens and swimming pools and corrective surgery. Franklin Roosevelt's speeches—if you compare them with Churchill's, you can see what I'm talking about. You can see it in the rhythms and in the imagery and in the statements. Roosevelt proposed the four freedoms, and Churchill offered blood, toil, sweat, and tears. (Or compare Twain with Wodehouse. Or Groucho Marx with Waugh.) The American sense of tragedy is so diluted by daydream as to seem almost ridiculous. We Americans create symbols helter-skelter, as a form of advertising, an active unreality. Churchill had a quite distinct entity to govern, a well-defined nation to lead, one constituted by its history. America is defined by what it does next: Roosevelt, like Lincoln and Kennedy and others, had to define the United States for us over and over; otherwise it would not have been clear what this nation was that we were actively supporting.



The author with his wife, Ellen Schwamm, at their home in New York City.

Compare Churchill's cigar with Roosevelt's cigarette holder. Churchill's drinking was overt, but Roosevelt's wheelchair was almost never photographed. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are strangely like ad texts, guarantees of the sort that you find in ads. And advertising is to nihilism and the threats of Heaven and Hell as matter is to antimatter. The foundations of middle-classness in America have nothing to do with social class in the European sense and everything to do with a Utopian attempt.

The American equivalent (which is hardly equivalent) of the landed gentry is a socially wobbly market of consumers who are rich and arrogant as all getout, easily intimidated yet not easily restrained. Here, because the culture is so unsteady (and so new), it is the how-to element that dominates—how to be *happy* or reasonably comfortable and in comfortable circumstances, how to deal with superior sorts of people who have status, who, say, enjoy opera. How to do this next, in the near, improved future. An American daydream, as in Twain (and Hemingway), is about rebuilding after the flood, about being better off than before, about outwitting this or that challenger, up to and including death.

Well, how do you manage to be optimistic *for the moment*? Without hope?

•

I INHERIT from my blood father and my blood mother and her father considerable physical strength. One time, when I was seven, I nearly died, because of an allergic reaction to an anesthetic, the ether derivatives then in use. (My mother, who died when I was two, returned in a hallucination, and I found it unbearable.) I went into convulsions and, according to the machines and measurements, I died: my heart stopped, my breathing stopped. Some young doctors and nurses and one old nurse saved me. I can remember their bustling labor, even the nervous smell coming off them. I had been more or less legitimately dead, but I managed to get up and walk partway across the hospital room that evening. My adoptive father called me Rasputin for a while: "Nothing can kill you."

Sick or well, all my life I've had enough strength for whatever I set out to do. But this time, no. That degree of strength was over. I knew how my parents had felt when their strength failed. It is extremely irritating. Certain melodramatic speeches do come to mind: "Kill me and get it over with." They both said that. I said it once or twice myself but with more irony. I would save my strength and then leap—biliously, worm-in-the-muddishly—into speech: "This goddam hospital bed is so uncomfortable you might as well *kill me and get it over with.*"

I was aware mentally of the threat of death as a rather awful certainty of sensory fact, of physical fact, but only in words. I mean the mind looked on, weakly, and saw the state as a folkish joke, like a newspaper headline: "THREAT OF DEATH FOR HAROLD," or "HAROLD IS GOING TO GET IT THIS TIME," or "H. R. BRODKEY FINDS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO SUCK MUD." With a subheadline: "This Is Rotten, Says Ex-Amateur Athlete." Then the subheads: "The Statistics Look *Bad*," and "Killer-Diller Pneumonia Strikes 'New Yorker' Writer."

My parents were ill for most of my childhood, and I was aware of the implacable dissimilarity between people and events in the active world and people and events in the grip of medical reality, the medicines scouring and wrecking, or surgical intervention doing that, or radiation. I was prepared for the loneliness and irritability or even madness of being a patient. I had experienced it already in my life, that time when I was seven years old, and again when I was thirty-one and had hepatitis and felt terrible, and the hepatitis was wrongly diagnosed as advanced liver cancer, and I was told I had only a few months to live.

But I experienced no outburst of emotion, no rage or grief of the sort Joe Brodkey, my adoptive father, had. I realized that I was suffocating, as my blood father, Max Weintrub, had—he suffered from something that was described to me as senile asthma: the asthma starved his heart, and his heart gave out. But he raged and cursed, as did my adoptive mother, Doris, who had cancer and told all those around her that *they were getting on her nerves.*

But, except for the suffocation, none of those things was happening to me. I felt very little of anything, I mean as comment. It was a relief to have the illness unmasked, to have Death be openly present. It was a relief to get away from the tease and rank of imputed greatness and from the denial and attacks and from my own sense of things, of worldly reality and of literary reality—all of it. In the last few years, mental and physical revulsion toward—oh, Lish, Mehta, and Lehmann-Haupt, Hilton Kramer, Barbara Epstein and Bob Silvers—had grown to the point where hiding and containing it had been a bit like having tumors that cleared up whenever I was upstate in the wilds or in Europe. The inadequacies of the work they did and in the awful work they fostered, the alternate revulsion and pity they aroused, I had had enough of. It was truly a perceptible relief to be out of their reach and into another sort of experience, even if it was terminal. It was a relief to have the future not be my speculative responsibility anymore and to escape from games of superiority and inferiority.

•

An American idiom is "this fucking intimacy." And the phrase can imply a kind of impatience with it as well as the sexual nature of it: it depends on your voice and on whether you smile when you say it. In Ellen, who echoed with a kind of merciful tenderness my moods and so reconstituted me, the Jewish sense of ancestry and a rebel's sense of enlightenment and escape are both at play. She was hostess in the narrow hospital room to my mothers, my mothers' ghosts or spirits, and the line of fathers, the four millennia of unkillable Jewish males in their conceited stiff-neckedness, then all the dead and dying literary figures, then all the characters who die in the books I most admire—Prince Andrei and Hadji Murad and Proust's narrator's grandmother—and then all the widowed women back to Andromache or Hecuba. And she made room for the nurses and the nurse's aides, for the internes and the residents, and for Barry. I have never seen such intent or such subtle seduction: I cannot even begin to describe the silent promises, the hidden blessings she promised them, she promised them all, the ghosts, too. And the death standing over me and stirring up the muck that refused to be the bottom in the onslaught of the revolting pneumonia.

I lived through her will from time to time during those days: I had her agility and subtlety vicariously. It was like that as long as she was awake, anyway, and as long as her strength held out. I felt a bit cheated, while she was awake, of the mortal solitude that comes at the end, but I had that merciful depth of her female self at my disposal.

Our regular lives, our usual life together, had been reproduced in a truncated form in a hospital room: flowers, fruit, a newspaper, quibbling with each other, a certain seclusion, a habit of judging—the usual

AGUA DE COLONIA

The sharp smell of cheap eau de cologne
(*agua de colonia*) will call it back:
every aspect of the lonely summer
in that other era, when I was young.

Watered pavements of narrow streets between
old buildings. Dim high-ceilinged cafés blue
with smoke from yellow-papered cigarettes.
The almost neutral taste of almond *horchata*
in a tall glass beaded with moisture. I pressed
my wrists against its sides to cool my blood.

Molten sunlight through the shutter slats
corrodes the floor tiles' lozenges and arabesques.
Insomnia under a mosquito net.
My scent. My languor. My formal clothing.

—RUTH FAINLIGHT

things, even at death's door, in death's presence.

But it was a hospital room, and I was dying, and I didn't have many private emotions. The husband in this marital scene was drugged to the teeth with prednisone, a steroid that walls off physical pain and depression by creating a strange pre-craziness of its own. I felt a rather awful clarity of humor, a nauseated comic sense; I was in an odd state. And the wife in the scene was overly gentle, sickroom gentle, terrified, and obstinately hopeful—not her usual self. She was afraid of gloom in this well-intentioned parody-caricature of our former life. The moments of grief I had were immediately contagious—well, the room was very small.

We would hold hands and I would say "Oh shit" or "This *is* shitty," and we would cry a bit. It seemed like a sufficient amount of poetry. I would say "Well, who cares?" or "I don't like this mushy stuff. Let's stop."

Equally invasive were the tender moments, Ellen bathing me and turning me, ninety-seven-pound Ellen, or changing the bed. Or her helping me into the bathroom. I had to be propped on her and on the wheeled pole of the I.V. I was determined to spare her my excrement. My head lolled. My legs gave way, but only once. I had no strength, but it is true that will power can do a great deal. It can't halt or cure AIDS, but it can take the place of physical strength and it can mock death and weakness: it can mock those things sometimes. Our bedtime talk or our toilet talk had to avoid sentiment; I had no strength for sentiment. I showed off for Ellen. I talked about business and money, about the information I'd negotiated from the doctor.

But she was the one with hope. She was the one with the sense of drama. She was the one who, with some, ah, degree of untruth, exclaimed on being told that she was H.I.V.-negative, "Oh, I don't want to be clear. I want to have it, too."

An emotional remark. A bit of a marital lie, of marital manipulation. But true enough in that if I decided to kill myself she was still determined, so she said, to kill herself, too.

She wanted to die of what I was going to die of.

"That's bullshit, honey. It isn't what I want. Just can it, O.K.?"

•

HOSPITALS have become a mess; they've lost it. The breakdown of the middle-class conspiracy that was urban culture in the West shows in hospitals as a visible and basic and entire decay. Everything is improvisatory and shaky, even cleanliness and the administration of treatment. But perhaps because of obstinate kindness in some people, a determination to embody goodness, or some addiction to the priority of emergency, or because the meaning of rescuing someone from death appeals to the soul or to your sense of importance in the universe, the best nurses and nurse's aides appear and take care of you when you are dying.

Or, I should say, I got that kind of care. I got more of it if Ellen was there. The medicine came on time, the I.V. was properly adjusted—and the attention, in its smallest details, had in it an element of respectful shoving at the body and the spirit in its fall, a funny kind of summoning, an American summoning, not to glory but to make use of the technology and techniques of treatment, to profit from them. One is expected to make an effort to return to suburbia, to the tennis court, to make an obeisance to life.

I had already browbeaten Barry into saying that there are no miracles, no cures here. No one has been rescued from AIDS so far. The practical limit of survival varies, but one hears a lot about two to five years. Some of that time, you can, with luck and proper treatment, feel quite well. As a prize, as a goal, it is not very *American.* It is not Utopian, although Barry tried to make it that way with amazing generosity; he would raise his voice and smile, and his eyes would brighten; he would look like an inspired pitchman, and he would produce his pitch for *life.*

But it's not life. I rode for a while on my limited breath, on the cadence, the metre of it, in obedience to the muse of immediate survival. I was unable to breathe without oxygen and was racked by my reactions to the huge amounts of medication dripping or pumped into me, or swallowed—fifteen pills at bedtime. I thought I could feel myself being suffocated second by second. But the prednisone did in a way comfort me. What was strange was that all sense of presence, all sense of poetry and style, all sense of idea left me. It was gone, with not one trace, one flicker remaining. I had a pale sense of the lost strength it would take to think or feel a metaphor, and of how distant it was from me. Everything was suffocation and the sentence of death, the termitelike democracy and chemical gusts of malaise and heat, of twisting fever, and the lazy but busy simmering of the disease in me. Everything outside me was Ellen's breath and the color of the walls in the dim light and was the hospital noises and the television set on its wall mount and a ticking slide of the moments.

And nothing was a phrase or seed of speech, nothing carried illumination in it, nothing spoke of meaning, of anything beyond breath. Attentive to nothing but breath, perhaps in my dying I was alive in a real and complete way, a human way, for the first time after ten or fifteen years of hard work. I lay awake in an almost bright amusement. Did you ever, as a child, play alone in a large cardboard box that a refrigerator came in? Or work alone in a large room? Or at night, when everyone else was asleep? Whatever I say now applies to feelings inside such a box, the box I'm in. No one can possibly know the power of feeling I project inside my carton.

Medical attention, and the horrors of illness and death, great death, amused me in a quiet way. Amused? Well, what do you feel when you're expected to fight against an often fatal pneumonia and you've been sentenced to death already? You are death meat. I don't see how you can coöperate in any ordinary way. You are a foot soldier, cannon fodder. Various functions of the body are endangered routinely. Tediously, you endure. You live in the tidal influx and efflux of medication. You make an attempt to go on as a person in the world. You smile at Barry. You smile at Ellen. You lie very still. But there is the grotesquerie of the patient, the mad person, the electrical flesh; the connection to the ordinary world is broken, yet not en-

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tirely. And there is a cartoon aspect: the curses people hurled at you have come true. What do you suggest I do? Be unamused?

And Barry meant to amuse, in the sense that he meant to give me a jolt, a blast of energy and momentum. It was as if he caromed in and set us, like billiard balls, bounding about the narrow room mentally, with animation. At times, he was exhausted and maybe depressed, but he hid it almost rapturously, with medical-business-like adjustments, with watchfulness. He worked in relation to a not yet fully understood disease using clinical experience and analogy. Really, I was grateful that he bothered. His respect for my life verged on the idiotic. He could not win. Literally, he shone and prescribed and analyzed and stole for me a month here, perhaps two years there. He kept studying medications and my face and my eyes while he was handling other patients, studying other faces and other eyes. Barry was moving fast inside a straight line, a medical frame, without much respect for the inevitable medical defeat. He put on a show, put up a fight, and I applauded as best I could. The spirit was cracked in me, but I offered what version of spirit I could to him. I joined the coarseness of struggle: this was my loyalty to the regular world.

●

TO skip ahead for a moment—for the sake of a moment outside the hospital—here is an entry in my journal from two months later:

Barry was so encouraging after my last visit that yesterday, when we arrived in the country, in the cooler air—with a fine wind and the stodgy trees attempting witty movements in the blowy air, and with the monkshood in bloom, very tall purple panicles next to our stone wall—I went entirely mad, carrying things, charging up and down stairs, and then collapsed, not seriously but totally, for eighteen hours. It was scary. But I went on feeling happy and released.

●

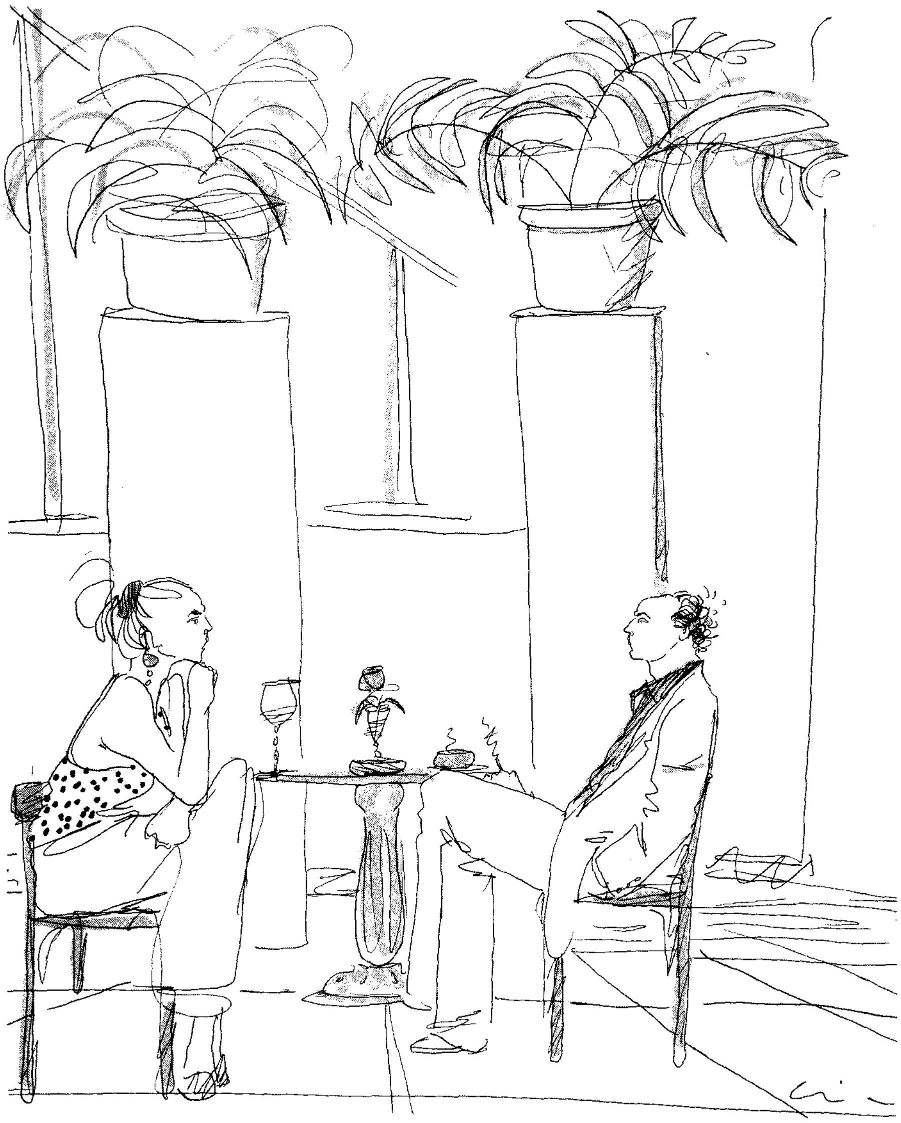
I COULDN'T really sleep. I was able on the prednisone only to doze in a kind of shallow unconsciousness. I believe in sleep. In the past, when I was ill, or even just sad, I would sleep it off.

Now, when Ellen slept, I expected to meet, as it were, my own feelings. Toward morning I would doze. I woke each time precariously placed in horizontal stillness, protecting my lungs and heart as I had with my posture when I was awake. I woke aware that I'd dreamed, and there was a fraction's hesitation before it became obvious I would not remember my dreams, that they had been about death, and that my waking self would not reproduce any part of them for me.

•

IN life, I have struck people as being odd, demanding, and evasive. The New York *agreement* among people of my sort is that everything about each other's lives is knowable. You take a few clues, regard them with sophistication, and you know *everything*. In the end, this is a city that acknowledges no mysteries, one that is set on prying, or getting, or revealing. I find New York talk horrendous, the personal conclusions stupid, the idealization of others' experience and the demonization of others' experience hateful and contemptible. And the bottom-lining, the judgments made as if all were known, the lies, the fraud, the infinite oral thuggery here of Jews and Gentiles alike, the cold ambition, is, I repeat, unlivable.

What we really have in this city are able people, competent people, who as they rise in the world have more and more complicated professional lives. Quite logically, that eats them up, and the monstrous residue that is left is beyond emotion, but with an appetite for it, and a terrible and terrified longing and unsuitability for it. This monstrous



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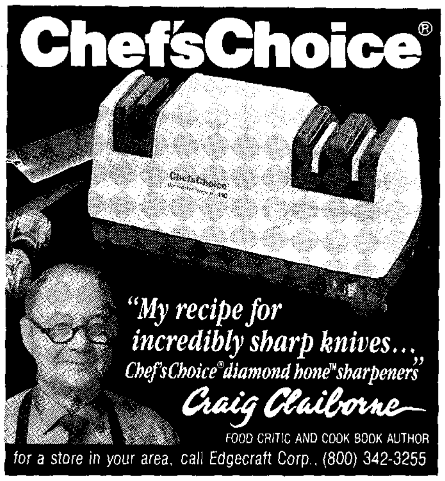
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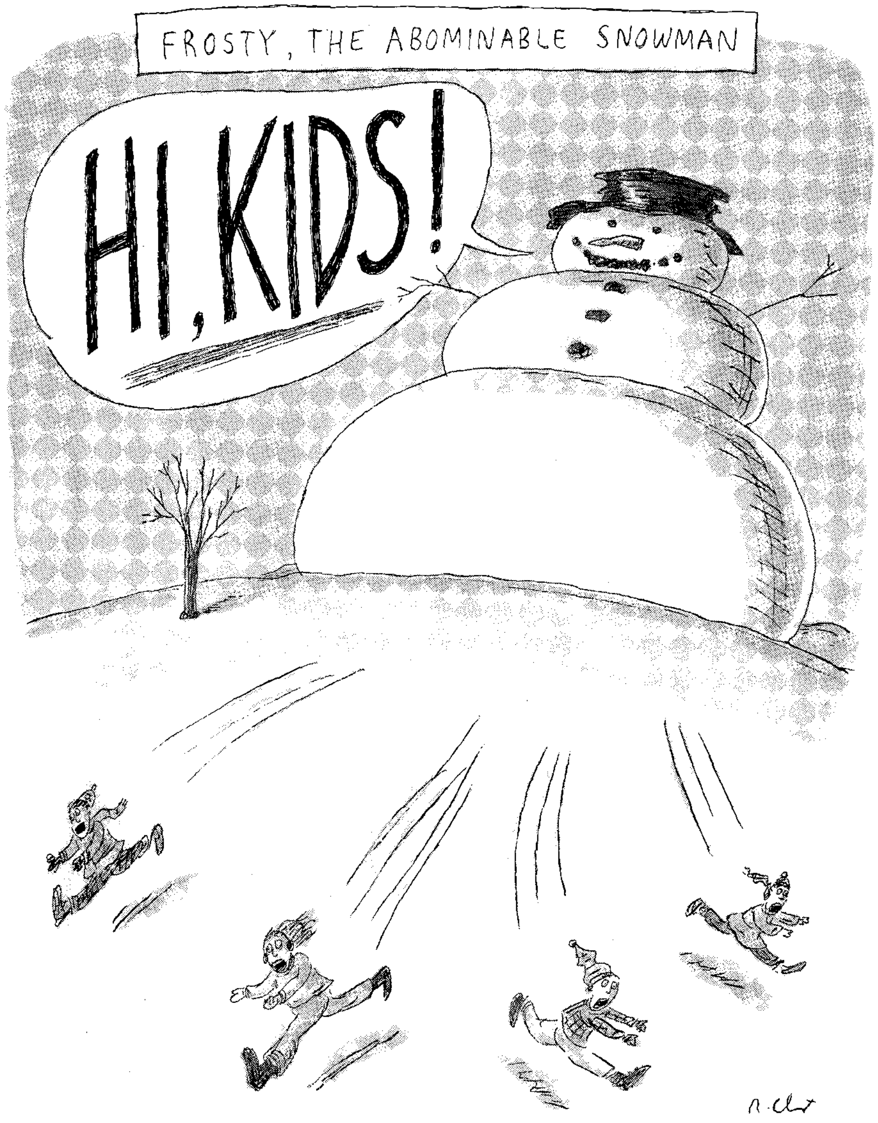

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residue is beyond friendship, beyond anything. (It *is* capable of truly marvellous, if ogreish, companionship.)

I have been lectured on this subject, told I am wrong when I say what dregs they are, what dregs we are, what a creeping madness our adulthood becomes. The above has been denied to me by nearly everyone in New York. But surely they must know.

•

No one can explain what it means to be marked out. The usual explanations, the traditional ones, have to do with sin—sins of the fathers and your own sins. But to be American is to be Nietzschean in half of yourself: You move beyond sin even if part of you still believes in it. You—or anyone—have to suffer your life or death under civil law, so to speak.

Part of the self is made of one's work: you get glimpses of meaning in that. A sense of your crimes can perhaps keep you alive. Or self-righteous indignation can save you. Doors fly open as in a farce, and something like Medusa's head swings into the corridors of illness like the end of a pendulum, turning you to stone. I kept wanting to cry out as Doris Brodkey had, or take refuge in rage as Joe Brodkey had. I wanted an inherited death. But I had, indeed, lost the past. This death seemed entirely mine, mine and Ellen's, alone.

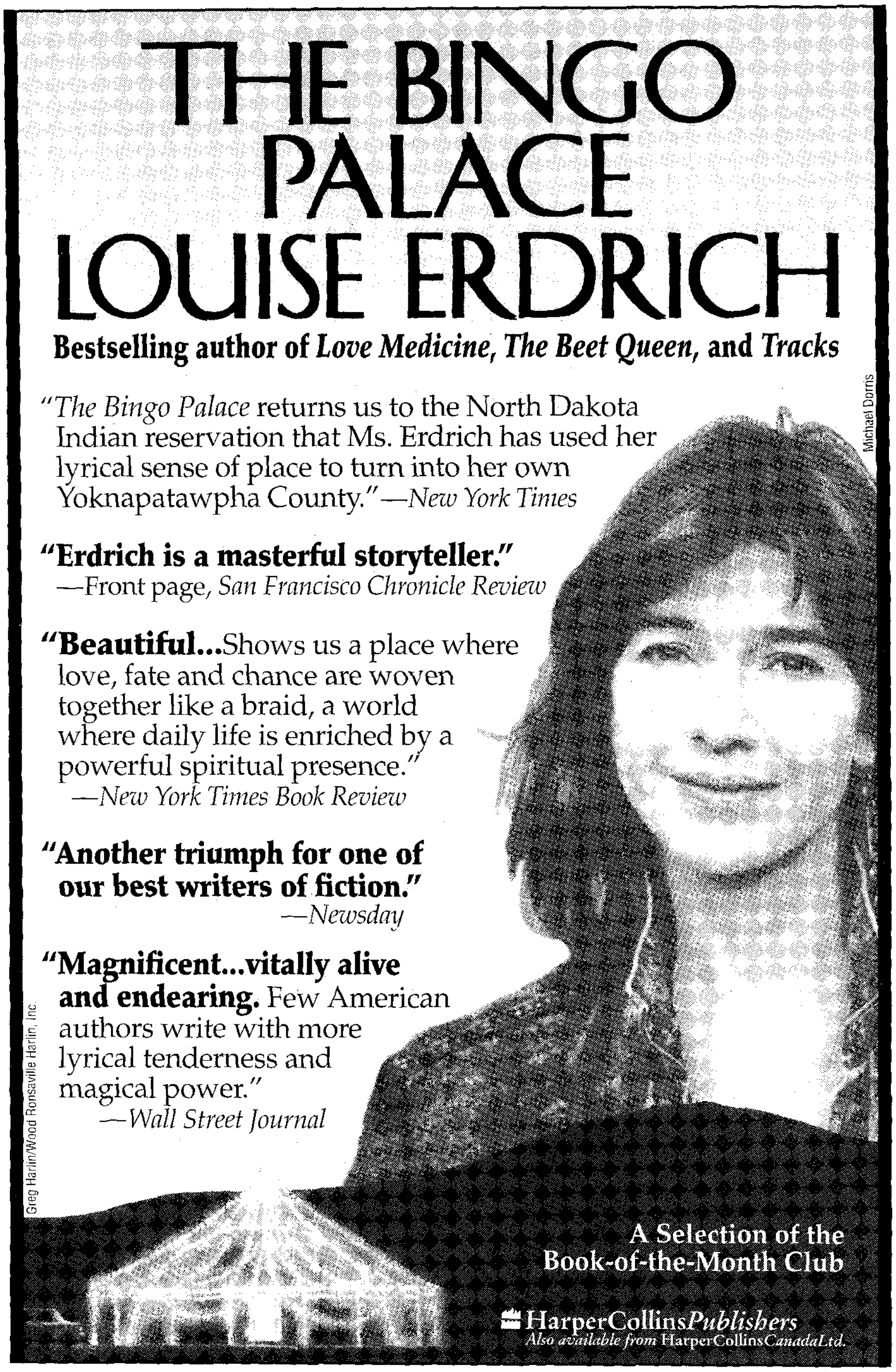
Death is not soft-mouthed, vague-footed, nearby. It is in the hall. The weakness does not wash over me and disappear but stays. It has a stagnant air. It floods me, and the flood is soul-wide. The casing that my youth and strength and luck came in is empty and vibrates a bit. A fox cub, a small bird nervous in the shadow, a bag of tainted blood, a skeletal and stiff figure lying still is what my consciousness is. It is like a small bird's being fed to have one's whispered wishes taken seriously and to be spared predatory sympathy. Barry and Ellen are going to save me for a while.

●

Do you know the myth of my irresistibility? It isn't easy to talk about. The Fuck You Dreamed Of, Maybe. What a joke. It was a matter of rumor—of reputation, all part of the floating aura, the sharp aroma of New York gossip. I practiced amateurishly and assiduously, and with some enjoyment and curiosity, but I wasn't up to it. My sexual limits were physically very clear. I failed to be a hero of the nineteen-sixties. Or of the nineteen-seventies. I wasn't up to the role. I never approached stylishness and acts that Mapplethorpe pictured and made public. I was never in the Casanova range and league of Norman Mailer. What I did and whatever actual events fuelled the image—whatever humor or vanity I showed—it was clear that most of the myth was based on the claims and gossip of others. I had a life, but not that one.

Tennessee Williams, who went to my high school long before I got there, and who had some of the same teachers, touched on the subject of male irresistibility in terms of hustlers and handsome strangers passing through town, always in rags, and subject to humiliation. In imitation, a playwright, William Inge, dealt with it more directly, more reportorially, in the play (later a movie) "Picnic." And such actors as Paul Newman, Marlon Brando, and William Holden for a while embodied this notion in various roles in Hollywood, getting shot and falling into the swimming pool and so on.

The American representation of The Good Fuck (an experience you owe yourself) always dealt with the childishness of such figures and with their failure in the world—handsome orphans, beaten down, beaten back, dependent on aging movie stars or on Anna Magnani as a moneyed storekeeper in a small town or on Kim Novak's depth as a woman; these sexy, bankrupt, Christ-like orphans, these phallus bearers and suppliers were by definition without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power in the world. Brando had trouble playing Napoleon or Marc Antony or any other type but the phallic martyr. And the highly successful writers, the troubled Williams especially, and the successful and power-mad directors could never suppress their contempt for these men in their degrees of failure and lack of power. Billy Wilder's version in "Sunset Boulevard" is the most contemptuous.

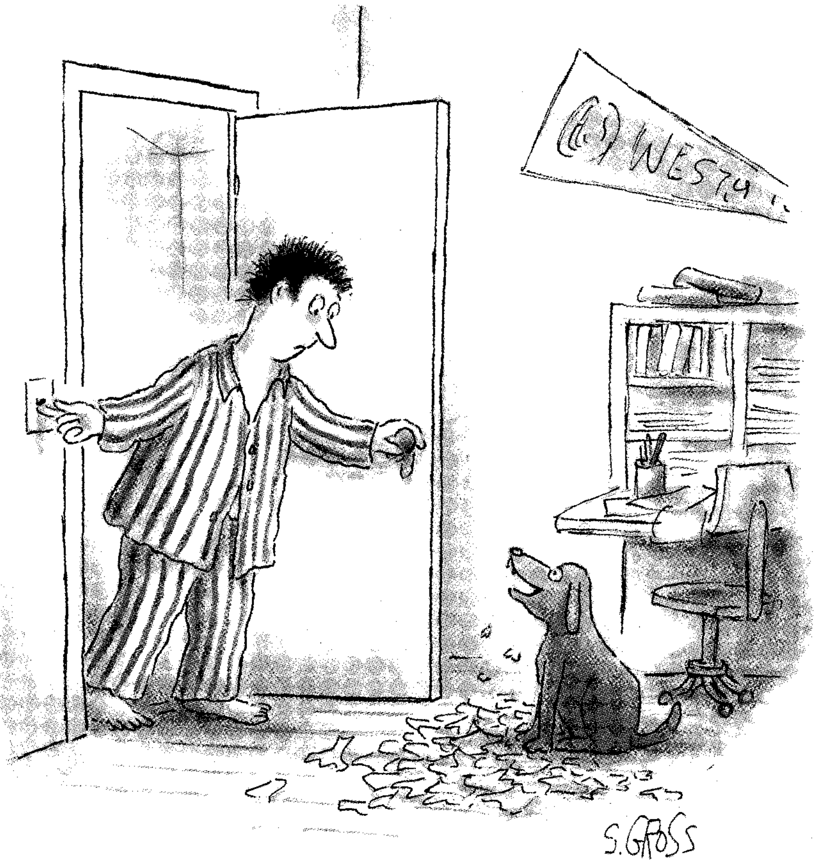
I don't know of any British versions of such male irresistibility in the writing of the modern era except for Basil Seal in Waugh's books, and he is a killer at heart. Lermontov and Stendhal and Pushkin are kinder but still cruel. Some of the more ancient versions, such as Joseph or David in the Bible, are treated with less contempt, but then they are pictured in their worldly power, their success; they are said to be blessed.

The American version is always a fool. Well, why not? In my case, it was a stupid thing and a bit hard to believe except in terms of sentimental anecdote, as in tales about my adoption. It is fantastically embarrassing to say that I was adopted illegally and with great difficulty, and the difficulty was accepted because of the infant's, the very young child's—the tales agree even if the photographs don't—extreme beauty.

The supposed beauty of a catatonic toddler as a small-town public "myth" among Jews is the substance of childhood drama—this irresistibility, these looks, these bones and features. From infancy, my life has been, always, always, on the verge of my being eaten alive: *I could just eat you up.*

It seems hardly earthshaking, this crap of *irresistibility,* but in life, in the literal reality this takes, it means gasps and anger at you and people crying because of you and a lot of gossip and various abduction attempts and threats of suicide because of you and your being followed on the street by people who are obsessed with you seriously, ludicrously. It means people hating you for a betrayal that never occurred, for what they feel is your luck, which they then want in their rage to undo. In my childhood, people talked a great deal about me and quarrelled over me—and threatened force. And there was violence, some of it directed at me.

I have seen, as an adult, children of such attention become quite violent



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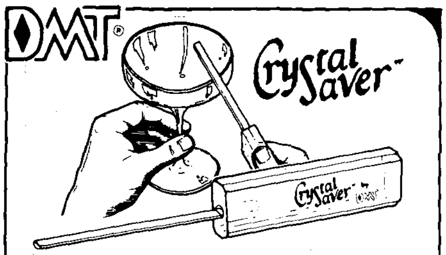
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themselves, and hysterical, and strange. I think of childhood and adolescence as sexual, as filled with the sexual intrusions of others. I was told that Doris Brodkey first tried to buy me from my real mother when I was a year old. I would suspect that the fate of *irresistibility* in the ordinary world is established in infancy as a condition of existence for most of us. But that in my case it has also partly determined my death.

I remember people coming to the house to see me—I remember being brought out after being dressed and combed, and being passed from embrace to embrace. How I hated to be touched. Or even looked at. Sometimes I would kick and scream and not allow my nurse to dress me. I would even climb out the window of my second-floor room and hide on the roof rather than go downstairs. It was commonly said, "That child needs discipline." You'd be surprised how odd—and troubling—a child's "No" was back in the nineteen-thirties, and how temperamentally the grownups reacted. Decades later, in New York, in almost any field of endeavor, when a sexual proposition was made to you by anyone, for you to say "No" seemed to mark you as an amateur, as unprofessional, unserious, and to some extent as a fool.

Really, one sees people cursed with *irresistibility* as being finally interesting for how they fail. For how they can be hurt. For how they retreat, become scarred, or obese, or dead. When I am attacked, it reminds me of my childhood. Spite and the desire to humble you combine uncertainly in an angry way to make you laugh with shock and secret recognition. Sanity becomes very pronounced in you, as a defense. Every touch verges on abuse, on recruitment.

Few people will ever see you without an affronted sense of their own *irresistibility* and of themselves as objects of competing emotion. This trait makes others feel that you are taking something large and valuable away from them, and if you believe we know things by comparison or if you believe in democratic (competitive) exhibitionism, then you *are* taking something of value away from them: their projection of themselves as more worth loving than you are.

I was *in fashion* in New York in terms of this *irresistibility* off and on for the last forty years. And it was an insiderish thing to be "in love" with me at those times. Other people won literary prizes or academic honors. *I* discriminated among emotions and suitors—and judged their quality as people, their odors, their intelligence, their powers of comedy and of being thrilling, their emotional intelligence. I had always, explosively, a kind of emotional citizenship, an undeserved welcome. I felt this absurd *irresistibility* as a form of comedy, as a useless joke. I am trying to describe the nature of the temptation offered to the child and by the child, then the adolescent, then the young man in New York who is now the aging man with AIDS.

Another man might "love" me like someone cheating at croquet, but the croquet court had been laid out in *me*, a pleasure ground of a peculiar sort. You play dumb and pretend to be respectable, but you are an old, old hand, an aged whore at this stuff. Outwardly, you perhaps are more distinguished and puritan in your air than that. No one need admit that you are this sort of person. People who become obsessed with you like to tell you that you're nothing special, that you're ugly—a certain amount of high and low melodrama lies in wait for you every day. Ah, the bitter phone calls. I cannot find in memory a day in my life without some erotic drama or other. I probably have never gone a day without it. And the temper with which you bear your history—the erotic slyness or directness—may give you a quality very like beauty, whatever your history is, whatever you actually look like. Perhaps it is a real beauty, the courage to have had a life of some sort, in spite of the difficulty, I mean.

•

ANYWAY, the major drama of my adolescence was that my adoptive father, Joe Brodkey, who was ill with heart trouble (a handsome invalid, as one would write in pornography) assailed me every day for two years, sexually—twice a day, every morning and every evening, when I was twelve and thirteen. He had nothing else to do, really. He was ill. We were not the same blood. I am being very shy. He never succeeded in entering me, but it was somewhat scary and sweaty. Except that there was the pathos of his dying. And

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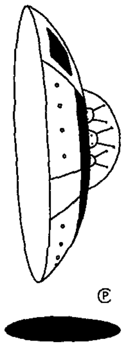
there was my long history of boring *irresistibility.* And my mind, which was watching all of it. His blood pressure was fragilely high. I was too strong, too frozen, for very much to happen, for the drama to develop.

I am lying. I had to notice that he was heartsick—with feeling, clearly *in love,* in a way. And soon, somehow, when I didn't make a scene about the assaults, or whatever, a great many people knew about "the love story." I suppose my mother talked about it for reasons of her own. My mother said he-can't-live-without-you things and he's-hooked-you-have-him-where-you-want-him-you-talk-to-him-for-me things. Or Dad talked about it—he had rather nineteenth-century ideas of family and of male rights.



I confessed nothing. I complained to no one. My mother, herself ill with cancer and drugged, warned me oracularly, "If I were you, I'd learn to keep my mouth shut." I don't mean to be insulting to her memory, but she was excited, even inspired, by the situation, which—it took no great brains to see—helped keep both her and Dad alive: it interested them, this *love* thing.

Such assaults as Joe's have their aspect of wanting to lower you, but at moments everything was focussed, as if in the last line of a story, on a profound concern having to do with the creature in whom my identity was at the moment caught. Either of my parents would have killed the other for me. Sometimes they fought over me, and it seemed to be to the death—this is not uncommon, is it? My mother said advisingly, "You never seem nice if you have to say no." I was a "fine-looking young fella" (which I never actually quite was; I was weirder than that), "a young man with a good smile, if you want my opinion." She said, "You make do with what you're given." It was what she had to play with, to move on the suburban board, in the terminal boredom of her life.

Still, for me, there was the drama, the persecution. And such assaults, such oddities, comic and manic or melancholy or dangerous, occurred everywhere, as if by contagion—with the football guys, with old friends, with the mothers of friends, with strangers. I was even half abducted once, forced into a car, but I fought and talked my way out of it. At school, my God, girls waited for me in the front hall, or in front in good weather. I was often surrounded by kids in the halls, and twice in one year, four times in all, the mothers of girls whose approaches to me I had ignored complained to the school principal that I had hurt their daughters' feelings, and couldn't I be made to respond? My parents were telephoned, were talked to. Whatever I was, it was not taken to be a private property and mine. I understood my father's actions on this level, in this light.

One of the troubles with the reality of the passage of time is that the past can be lied about. False precedent can be argued. Unexamined realities can be dropped from conscious equations. The thing itself, the sexualized courtship, arose from the boy's comforting and, on occasion, holding and rocking his forty-four-year-old father when his father was racked by death-fever or rage or panic. Life perhaps was defined by one's code of behavior. I would start to laugh and accept an embrace briefly, as in childhood—and then cut it short. It is your own moral judgment that arranges this refusal of your father even though he is dying. Such refusal is arrogant toward Daddy. Or at least it places a positive value on your own life. To ignore the feelings you arouse is indistinguishable from narcissism to someone who wants your attention. I am not complaining. I noticed that the denial of truth was what everyone called *tact.* He accursed me. Now I will die disfigured and in pain.

To tell a little of the story about me and my father less shyly, I would have to change the way I write. In real life, I experimented with homosexuality to break my pride, to open myself to the story.

•

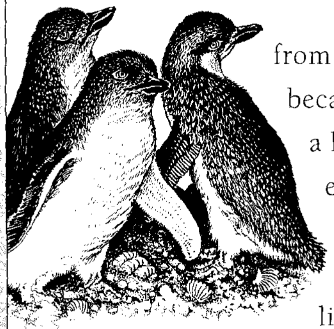
MEDICINE and will and luck. Barry and Ellen. I didn't die. I didn't even have to be sent to intensive care. Then, outside the hospital, the light had a perceptible weight, and I blinked and flinched. The outdoor noises, city noises, flew and scratched. I struggled to control my breathing. And it was as Barry had said: I had not really known how sick I was—dying, yes, but not how sick.

I felt myself dissolve into the space spreading around me. In the taxicab, in the streets, I was so crippled by filmy fluctuations of consciousness—on East Seventy-second, on Madison, on West Eighty-sixth, where the walls of brownstones seemed watery and then gauzy—that I was far more imprisoned by weakness than I had been by the hospital and its routines. I was maddened by my silent passing out and coming to in the city stink as the taxi bounded and bounced. I stayed upright. Ellen was stiff-faced and brightly talkative beside me. "I can't respond," I whispered. She held my hand. Halfway home, I was so ill with exhaustion that tears of pain came to my eyes. I had no intention of admitting that I had made a mistake in forcing Barry to let me leave the hospital a few days early. I said, at least half a dozen times, "Boy, is it wonderful to be out of the hospital!" Then I gave that up and asked Ellen if she was managing, if this was too much for her. If she had said yes, I would have turned back. She said she was O.K.

We, I, made it to the apartment, and I climbed into my bed in my clothes. Ellen undressed me, set out the pills and the notebook in which she was going to log my symptoms and the hours at which I took the pills. I dozed and woke, but uncomfortably and without being refreshed by the sleep, which was as truly terrifying as falling off the edge of the world might be—to be so unrefreshed by sleep. I walked, crept, partly crawled to the stereo in my darkened bedroom and played one of Bach's partitas; it sounded harsh to me. I slept, always in an uncurative way, sometimes with music playing. Much of the time, I just listened to the distant sounds of street noises and of Ellen coming and going.

Sick and weak, each day, in the morning, for an hour or more, I stirred myself and worked on the last draft of a book I've written about Venice. Red and covered with spots (allergy to the drugs), I worked, and while I worked I felt nothing apart from a weakness of mind and some nausea. I mean, I had no reaction to the story or to the prose: I had to work with memories of response.

Sometimes I couldn't work at all,



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couldn't focus, and I would cry, but only a bit, and crawl back to bed, or if I was working in bed I would cover my eyes with my hands and lie still and breathe and doze and then try again to work. I must admit I truly felt accursed. My mother, my real mother, died, according to family accounts, of a curse laid on her by her father, a wonder-working rabbi. When I was barely two, she died painfully, over a period of months, either of peritonitis from a bungled abortion or from cancer, depending on who related the story. Then Doris, my father's cousin, and Joe came for me and, later on, adopted me. I was told that Doris took me once to the hospital to see my mother and that I refused her embrace, clinging instead to the perfumed Doris; the rescued child was apparently without memory of the dying mother. (Perhaps that was the real crime, and not my obduracy with Joe.) So, in between working out when I could most probably have become infected with AIDS, I fell into a mood of being accursed, of being part of an endless family story of woe and horror.

I felt worse each day, almost as if as the emergency faded so did the mobilized strength. Endless sickness without death is more sickening than I would have imagined. I wanted to make, as a sort of joke, a version of the superhuman effort that Ellen wished for from me. But, you know, as you get older you get worn out in regard to superhuman efforts—you've made them for your child or in your work (superhuman for you) or in sport or love or for someone who is ill. And then the possibility is gone. Ellen was working at a superhuman rate, nursing me, helping me up and to the word processor and back to bed. She shopped, cooked, kept house, took care of pending business, dealt with whatever emergencies came up, answered the phone and lied to people about my illness, fed us and made conversation, and proofread the work I produced. She got us movies for the VCR and lay down with me and kept me company, and brought me ice bags when the fever rose and my head hurt, and kept the medication log and saw to it that I took the medications and my temperature when I was supposed to, and, when I asked her to, she sang to me.

She helped me dress and then undress; she didn't approve of my staying in pajamas all day. Her omnipotence was at full stretch and had a softly shining and rather detached aura to it that enclosed my sense of being accursed and diluted. It was a cousin to that neurotic activity of will in able women which is so often written about with disapproval, and it was crazed, I suppose, that tirelessness, that as if inexhaustible tenderness. Clearly forced, or maybe not, it was far stronger and more unflagging in effect than any courtship intensity that had ever been directed at me.

We called no one. We were still telling the family and anyone else who telephoned that I had pneumonia, nothing more. In a rather transparent isolation, my arrogant deathliness and her burning gentleness were dancing together in a New York light in our apartment. It was like childhood, a form of playing house.

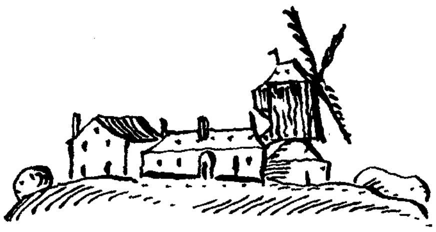
Then she said, "When are we going to tell the children?" She wasn't looking forward to it—it's not just embarrassment, you know: it's preliminary distress in case they're not very nice at first; and, on the other hand, as a parent you are ashamed to inflict this downer on them if they are warmhearted and do sympathize. The likeliest thing is that you'll have to console them.

"Later. In a few days, we'll start. I can't deal with it yet."

"That's all right."

She was careful, so that I would not blame myself. I felt myself to be thoroughly repellent. I had disowned my body now and was mostly pain and odors, halting speech and a sick man's glances. The truths in such domestic and emotional enclosures tend to go unrecorded. Things drift into the sanctuary from the outer world; the television is a window, and the telephone is a murmurous keyhole. Somewhere in this phantasmagoria, Ellen decided to wake me.

A kiss—how strange her lips felt, and the quality of life in them. Of course, I thought, of course. The sense I had of her, the sensations: the heat of her skin, the heat of her eyes so close to me, everything in her was alive still and full of the silent speeches that life makes. She was warm and full of responsive motion. My lips and feelings had the deadness of a sullen child's.



I accepted her and her affection as truth, as being as much truth along those lines as I was likely to want. This meant that by the second week I was home we both realized that, in this limited world of mutual watchfulness and of unselfishness-for-a-while, this period was for us, in awful parody, honeymoonlike, and that this was acceptable to both of us, grief or death at the end or not.

Grief aside, nothing ugly happened at all. Since she didn't mind—or rather didn't show disgust at my ashenness—I grew more affectionate: the corpse put his arm around her. She noticed and commented on the strength of my heartbeat. "Yes, I've always been especially proud of my heartbeat." She kissed me on the lips with generous marks of interest and amusement. She said to me, "No one would believe that this was one of the happiest times of my life."

I roared with laughter, which hurt my stiff lung and made me choke. And I came alive again, for a little while. Well, why not? When the other things are over and done with, when savagery and silence are the impolite, real thing, you're not alone. You still pass as human among humans. There are things that have to be done, family things, literary stuff, things having to do with AIDS. I do them with her marks of interest and amusement on my face.

•

DYING, too, has a certain rhythm to it. It slows and quickens. Very little matters, but that little is of commanding importance to me. I feel the silence ahead of me as I have all my life felt the silence of God as a given and a source of reasonable terror. This is something one must bear, beyond the claims of religion, not the idea of one's dying but the reality of one's death. One schools oneself in an acceptance of the terror. It is the shape that life takes toward its end. It is a form of life. ♦

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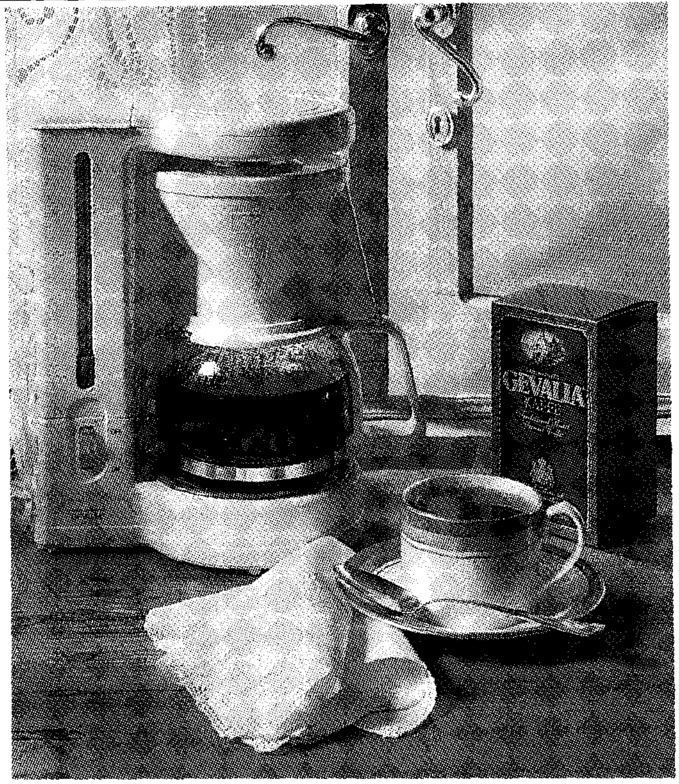

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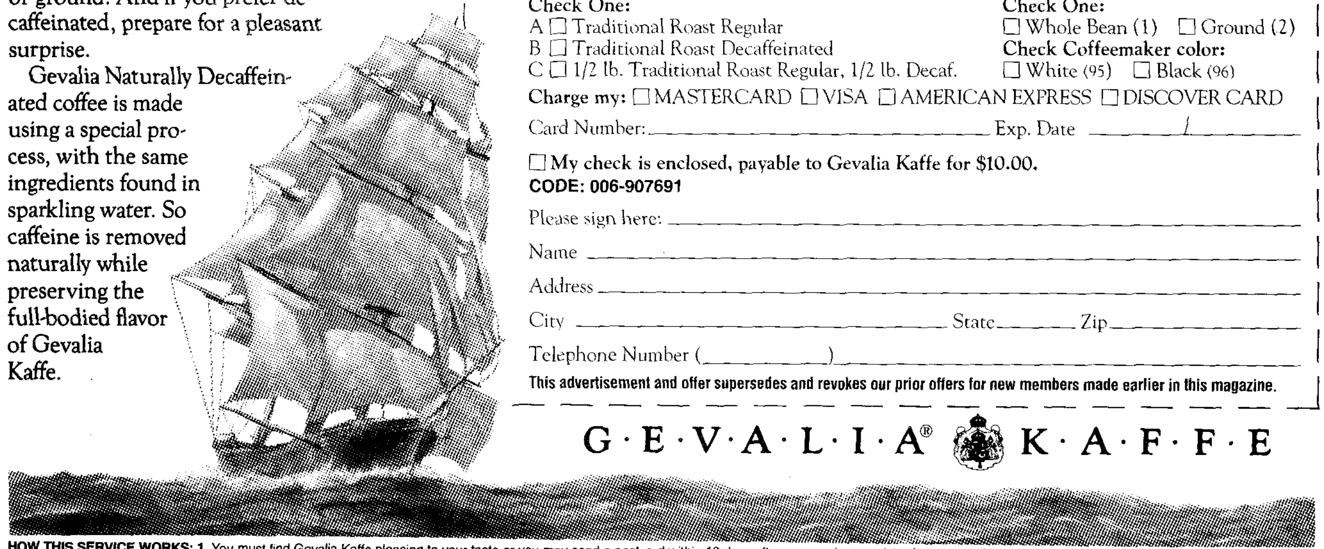

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THE CRITICS

THE CURRENT CINEMA

BAD BLOOD

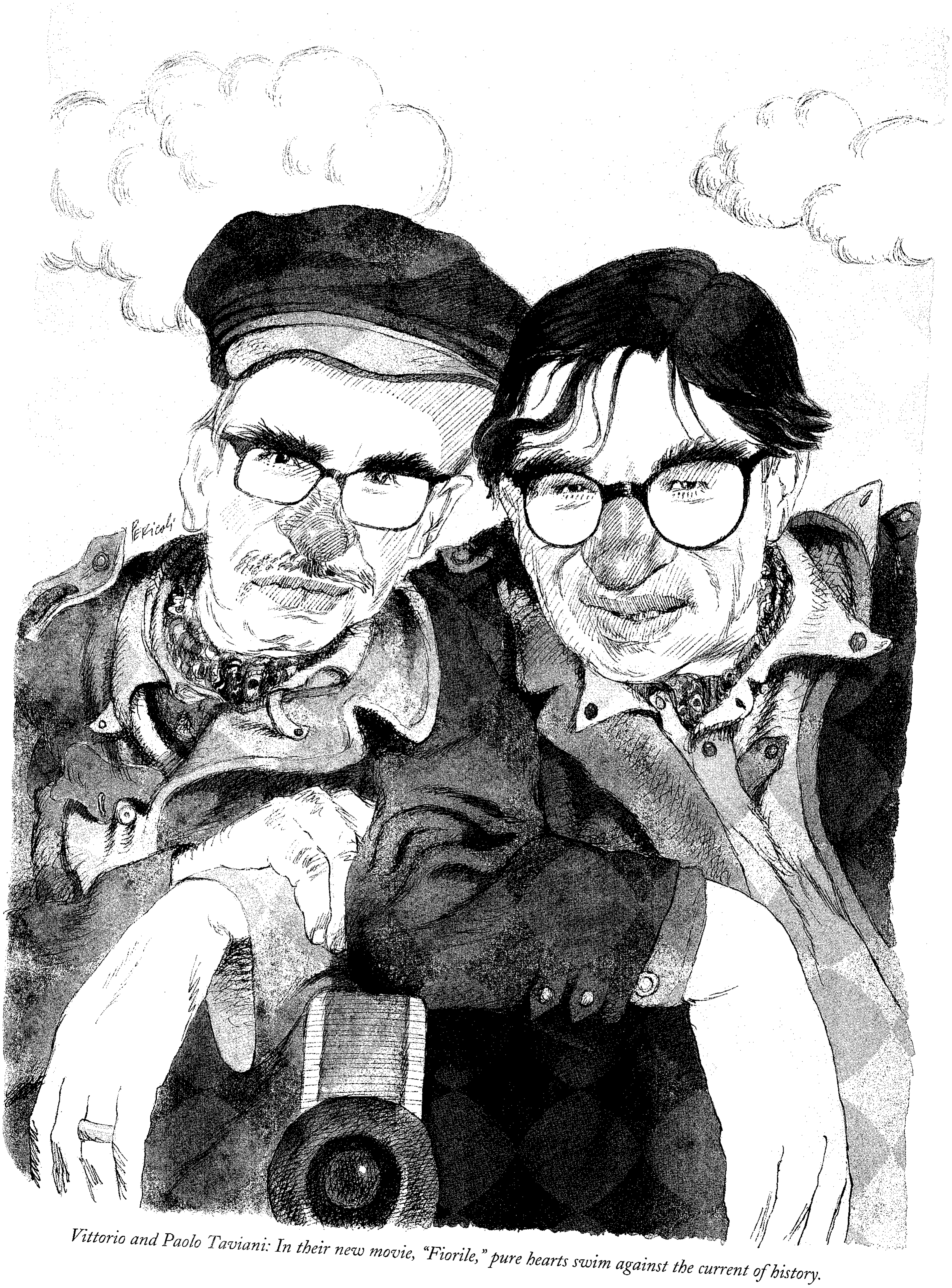
BY TERRENCE RAFFERTY

"FIORILE," a new movie by the Taviani brothers, Paolo and Vittorio, is a family saga that, according to the filmmakers, is based on legends they heard while they were growing up in Tuscany. The picture, spanning two hundred years, tells the story of the Benedettis, who are sometimes referred to by the locals as the Maledettis. The word *benedetti* means "blessed"; *maledetti* means "cursed" or "damned," and it's easy to see why the pejorative version of the name has stuck to the family for nearly two centuries. The Benedettis begin as peasants and become wealthy landowners, but their prosperity and power derive from an act of betrayal: an original sin, committed in the seventeen-nineties, for which future generations have never received full absolution. They're destined to keep paying, over and over, for their eighteenth-century ancestors' crime. The screenplay, by the Tavianis and Sandro Petraglia, is constructed as a series of historical tales framed by a contemporary story in which members of the three surviving generations of Benedettis illustrate, in various ways, the consequences of their blighted family history. The filmmakers' narrative method relies heavily on echoes and suggestive repetitions; actors, settings, camera angles, and patterns of behavior recur from story to story. And the film is edited to such a graceful, purposeful rhythm that all the disparate streams of memory and legend seem to be flowing effortlessly in the same direction, as if they were fated to come together and form a mighty river, its current driven by an overpowering sense of historical inevitability. The movie's vision of life is inherently tragic: the Tavianis mean to follow the course of bad blood as it surges through time, and to make us feel its awful, unstoppable momentum.

All the elements that the filmmakers set in motion in "Fiorile" do ultimately converge, in a climax—set in the present—that is both elegantly conceived and ingeniously staged, but the movie somehow falls short of delivering the tremendous emotional impact that it promises. The Tavianis have both the technique and the temperament to make films that articulate a rich, complex vision of history. They give equal attention to the intimate textures of everyday experience and to the big-picture perspective that attempts to explain the global significance of great events. Like D. W. Griffith, to whom they paid homage in "Good Morning Babylon" (1987), they get their most stirring effects with tight closeups and extreme long shots. Their best film, "The Night of the Shooting Stars" (1982), evokes the huge turmoil of the Second World War in Europe by means of small, personal anecdotes about ordinary people from a village in Tuscany; in that picture, the Tavianis seem like alchemists, extracting pure universal truths from the homely, adulterated stuff of local folklore. "Fiorile" borrows a key narrative strategy from "Shooting Stars"—in both pictures, the framing device involves parents telling stories to their children—but this time the material won't quite yield to the Tavianis' transformative skill. Although they give the Benedettis' tale a gorgeous shine, the miracle refuses to happen.

To put the movie's fundamental problem as starkly as possible: the three legends we're told about this family aren't extraordinary in themselves, and the thematic structure that the filmmakers have imposed on them is shockingly banal. The whole elaborate saga comes down to a parable about love versus greed, with each character embodying one quality or the other. The first tale, about the Benedettis' initial, fateful transgression, introduces the simple ideas that inform "Fiorile," and, in the process, virtually exhausts them. On a sunny day near the end of the eighteenth century, Napoleon's Army camps out near the rundown farm of the Benedettis, and a handsome, idealistic young French soldier, Jean (Michael Vartan), seduces Elisabetta Benedetti (Galatea Ranzi) in the woods. While they're in the transports of passion, Jean neglects his duty—to guard a chest full of gold coins, which the army has been lugging through Tuscany—and Elisabetta's weaselly brother, Corrado (Claudio Bigagli), steals the treasure. Jean's superiors tie him up in the village square and leave him there overnight, having told the townspeople that if the chest is not returned by morning the soldier will be executed. Elisabetta, delirious with fever, is unaware of her lover's plight, and unaware, too, that her family is responsible for it. Her brother and her mother want to keep the gold; her father doesn't—not until he realizes that the young prisoner in the square is also his daughter's seducer. They let Jean die. In the story's ironic conclusion, Elisabetta begs her mother and her brother to help her find

TULLIO PERICOLI



Vittorio and Paolo Taviani: In their new movie, "Fiorile," pure hearts swim against the current of history.

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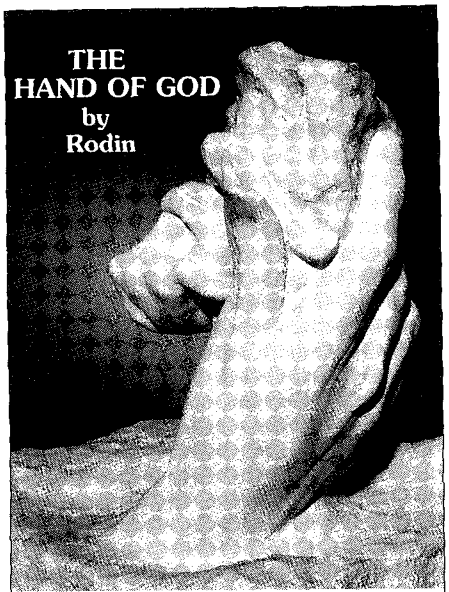
the thief and avenge her lover's death.

The narrator in the framing story, Luigi Benedetti (Lino Capolicchio), is telling this legend to his small children as they drive through Tuscany on their way to visit Luigi's father, Massimo (Renato Carpentieri), whom the kids have never met. In voice-over, Luigi fills in the rest of the story: Elisabetta gives birth to Jean's son, but dies in childbirth, never learning the truth of her family's treachery; the remaining Benedettis use the stolen money to buy huge tracts of land, and thus become one of the most powerful and prominent families in the region. Despite a dramatic lapse or two, this opening tale is strong, clear, and moving, and its simple ironies are devastatingly effective. The notion that the Benedettis have mistaken good fortune (Jean's tryst with Elisabetta) for bad, and bad fortune (the gold) for good isn't an especially sophisticated idea, but it's interesting enough for a swift, boldly drawn folktale, and the Tavianis know how to make this sort of small-scale fable work. They fill the naïve form with rigorously beautiful images of the landscape, and animate these lonely settings with a passionate sense of romantic possibility: Elisabetta's yearning and Jean's gallantry seem, touchingly, to spring right out of the serenely lovely hills and fields of Tuscany, and to embody some elusive principle of harmony. It's not surprising that Jean is a fervent believer in the noblest ideals of the French Revolution; he is, in a sense, a figure from the Marxist myth of lost social innocence—a hero brought down by the corrupting force of money.

"Fiorile" gets into trouble when the Tavianis move into the later generations of the doomed Benedettis and try to elaborate on the dire consequences of the family's fall from grace. The plotting of the two remaining legend sequences is so uninspired that we begin to suspect the filmmakers are simply running through the obligatory steps of a rather schematic argument. The second story, set in 1903, again has Ranzi and Bigagli playing a sister and a brother, and this brother also contrives, for selfish reasons, to thwart his sister's romance. The sequence seems to exist only to demonstrate that history repeats itself, albeit with variations. (This time, the woman discovers her brother's treachery, and gets revenge.) The third tale, which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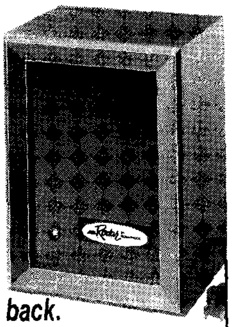
takes place during the Second World War, presents a young Benedetti, Massimo, who appears to have inherited all of Jean's sterling qualities (he is played by the same actor) and none of the more typical characteristics of his family—the sneakiness, the meanness, the venality. This fresh-faced paragon goes mad (or thinks he does) because he's too sensitive, too conscious of the recessive gene of really lousy character still lurking in him. The Jeans of the world—the pure believers in freedom and love and the original uncorrupted unity of human society—are condemned to failure, the movie tells us. They're swimming futilely against the current of history. The old, weak Massimo, sitting at the dinner table in the family's original farmhouse and gazing morosely at his son and his grandchildren, suddenly announces, "The gold won." He sees in the generations that follow him the seeds of the evil he fears, and walks off, defeated.

The film's climax takes place in the attic of Massimo's house. The confused old man converses with what he thinks is the ghost of Jean; the spectre turns out to be something very different, and when Massimo realizes that he has been fooled—that the spirit of the brave young exemplar of freedom has not truly come back to life—the knowledge is too much for him, and he goes under for the last time. And the Tavianis, by martyring him, reveal their own fatal flaw, which is a rather broad streak of ideological sentimentality. The final images of the film belong to the grandchildren, Emilio (Ciro Esposito) and Simona (Elisa Giani), each of whom, predictably, is made to represent one strain of the divided Benedetti legacy. Simona traces the word "Fiorile"—the name, derived from the French Republican calendar, that Jean gave to Elisabetta—in the mist on a car window. Emilio stares, transfixed, at a gold coin he has stolen from his grandfather's attic. Although the Tavianis place Simona's vision last, the chilling image of the radiant coin held in Emilio's palm is what lingers in the viewer's mind, perhaps because the movie has so thoroughly persuaded us that the gold will always win. Or perhaps because the boy's fascination with the shiny object represents more accurately the fate of the Tavianis in this ravishing but strangely hollow picture. "Fiorile" glitters, but its real worth is less than meets the eye. ♦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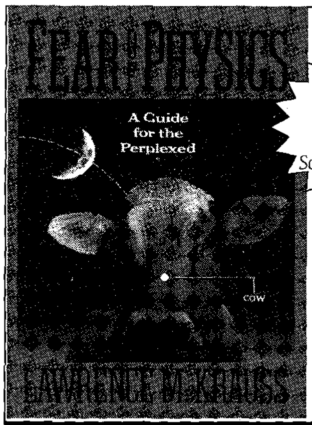
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A CRITIC AT LARGE

THE RAGE OF APHRODITE

BY CLAUDIA ROTH PIERPONT

BEFORE the Revolution, Marina Tsvetaeva refused to accept money for the publication of her poetry. She was not above accepting the tribute of a small gift, however, and it was as a guest of the publisher of a St. Petersburg literary journal that, at the end of 1915, she travelled from her home in Moscow to a New Year's party and private reading in the imperial capital, where, as a blizzard raged, "*all* Petersburg read, and *one* Moscow," she reported proudly. A professor's daughter, Tsvetaeva was twenty-three, the author of a volume of poetry that had been acclaimed for its apparent spontaneity and unabashed intimacy—it was her first book, which she'd published herself, at eighteen—and of a second book, which had been summarily dismissed. Her work was subject, understandably, to emotional awkwardness and to flourishes of overstatement, and critics, noting her age and her command of a range of poetic forms, expressed the hope that she would outgrow her weaknesses. But Marina Tsvetaeva outgrew nothing. Instead, she cultivated her weaknesses as she did her strengths: she clung to emotional extremes, she intensified her use of hyperbole and her tone of outcry, and, in the process, she developed the most peculiarly excitable and brilliant and perhaps the most individual style in twentieth-century Russian poetry.

The supreme Russian poets whose works bridge the Revolution—Anna Akhmatova, Boris Pasternak, Osip Mandelstam, and Tsvetaeva—were born within three years of one another, between 1889 and 1892, as though history had determined on an immortal record of the devastation to come. Only Akhmatova and Pasternak survived into old age. Mandelstam was killed by his government in 1938, and Tsvetaeva died—there are those who would say she, too, was killed—in 1941. In recent years, the poetry and essays and letters of these great poet-martyrs have been published in enormous editions and subjected to intensive study in Russia and, increasingly, in Europe and the United States. In this country, Tsvetaeva remains the least known of the illustrious quartet (a grouping acknowledged by Akhmatova in the late poem "The Four of Us"), and for good reason. There exists no commonly accepted English translation of even a fraction of her more than two thousand poems, and the majority of English versions that can be found in anthologies or in various slim selections do little to account for her veneration among Russian readers. Tsvetaeva's poetry not only is syntactically complex but is uniquely fixed in the sound patterns of the highly inflected Russian language: extraordinarily compressed and involute, with an explosive density of internal reference. "*S novym godom—svetom—kraem—krovom!*" she begins the poem "Novogodnee" ("New Year's"), an elegy to Rilke, and Joseph Brodsky's deliberately rough, working translation gives us "Happy New Year—World/Light—Edge/Realm—Haven!" This is a poetry of driven rhythms and steep intonation, of high musicality. "They absolutely must be read aloud, otherwise they'll fall flat," Tsvetaeva warned of one group of lyrics, and the injunction may be taken broadly.

Simon Karlinsky, whose groundbreaking 1966 study of her life and work ushered Tsvetaeva into the English-speaking world, dismissed even the possibility of translating certain of her effects. Brodsky has written persuasively, in an essay available in English, on the originality and power of Tsvetaeva's Russian versification in the Rilke elegy, for which no remotely satisfying English translation exists, or perhaps can exist. (After more than six pages of analysis of the single "overloaded" opening line, Brodsky notes, "There are 193 more lines like this in 'Novogodnee.' ") Bilingual editions of her White Guard poems, translated by Robin Kemball as "The Demesne of the Swans," and of her last collection, "After Russia," translated by Michael M. Naydan with Slava Yastremski, can serve as tools for those who might work their way into the Russian (this reader included), but they provide few convincing, freestanding English poems. (A mere glance at the juxtaposed columns of these editions reveals how Tsvetaeva's compounded blocks of words—often just one or two words to a line—are demonumentalized in translation, shattered into the requisite English shower of verbs and prepositions.) The fact is that Tsvetaeva's language is difficult even for many Russians. Rilke, who in his youth had tried his hand at composing poems in Russian, but whose command of the language had faded by the time he corresponded with Tsvetaeva, had to admit to her that, while he prized her as a poet—through her letters (written in German) and through his sense of an essential rhapsodic affinity—he couldn't actually grasp her poetry at all.

Marina Tsvetaeva, photographed in Paris in 1933.

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None of this is to say that Tsvetaeva's work is "difficult" in the sense of being dry or in any way abstruse. On the contrary, she is the most rivetingly direct and dramatic of poets, feverish with the need to communicate. And her most abiding subject is the torment of passionate, sexual love, a love not meekly awaited or gratefully accepted but demanded as a right and held out as a goal or—in poems addressed to men she briefly worshipped or desired—as a dare. Next to the keening violins of women's traditional love poetry, brought to perfection in Russia by Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva's instrumentation is for brass: bold, charged, indignant. The brazen tone that once caused her work to be termed "hysterical" and condemned for "morbid eroticism" by offended contemporaries has now secured her entrance into the ranks of feminist heroines, fully sexed and unashamed.

Along with the appearance of this "new" Tsvetaeva in academic studies—Barbara Heldt's "Terrible Perfection: Women and Russian Literature" is a particularly able and insightful example—there have been four full-length biographies of Tsvetaeva in English since Karlinsky's introductory effort. What has brought on such a show of attention? Since the nineteen-eighties, two collections of her irresistibly vivid essays have appeared in English—titled "Art in the Light of Conscience" and "A Captive Spirit"—but these remain little known. Interest was piqued by the publication of her correspondence with Rilke and Pasternak, in German in 1983 and in English two years later, after a ban she had imposed on the publication of Rilke's letters had expired ("when Rilke's letters will be simply Rilke letters—not to me—to everybody"). But is it possible to embrace a poet simply as a stirring figure, without embracing, or even being able to read, the poetry? In our insatiable age of biography, it may be so.

Viktoria Schweitzer's "Tsvetaeva" (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $35), translated from Russian into English by Robert Chandler and H. T. Willetts, is the fourth, and latest, account to reach us, and is a notably humane portrait of the poet—or, rather, of the woman. Schweitzer, a Muscovite, graduated from Moscow State University in the mid-fifties, just as Tsvetaeva's long-forbidden poetry was starting to spread wildly, both in official journals and in samizdat; she emigrated to the United States in 1978, and teaches now at Amherst and Mount Holyoke. She has produced a warmhearted book, rich in landscapes and interviews and personal reflections, which seems less a scholarly study by an outsider than the near-memoir of a beloved friend. Excerpts from the poetry, translated by Peter Norman, are placed throughout the story, yet remain secondary to its drama and detail.

In deliberate counterpoint to Schweitzer's narrative is Jane A. Taubman's "A Life Through Poetry: Marina Tsvetaeva's Lyric Diary" (Slavica Publishers), published in 1989, after Schweitzer's book appeared in Russian (in Paris); it is the best-integrated consideration of Tsvetaeva so far. Taubman traces the life through the evidence of the work—her argument for a "lyric diary," taken from Tsvetaeva herself, depends on the connection of the two—and the poetry runs in continuous, if abbreviated, snatches, in both languages, throughout her text. Taubman's translations are her own, and she makes no attempt, as she states at the outset, to reproduce the intricate metres or rhymes of Tsvetaeva's poems, or their formal structures. As a result of such constraints and diminutions—and despite the fact that many of Taubman's renderings are the best available—the English reader is often baffled by the disparity between the author's impressive claims for a poem and the apparently undistinguished example of raw emotion and near-cliché that is cited as evidence. Taubman talks the new feminism, but her Tsvetaeva, deprived of the dignity of her craft, sounds discomfitingly like the undisciplined hysteric she was once presumed to be. In Taubman's treatment of the life, Tsvetaeva is better served. While Schweitzer tends to be protective of the foibles of her heroine, at times even primly disavowing the erotic anxieties that drove the poet to her deepest, richest themes, Taubman is canny and clear-eyed, and brings us closer to a woman with a complex psychology than does Schweitzer's morally exalted and profoundly Russian vision of the Poet.

Those who knew her have often reported that there was no division between Tsvetaeva the poet and Tsvetaeva the woman. Each was emotionally outsized, unflinching, continually and insistently risking a spill into foolishness or disaster instead of the ecstatic achievement she sought. She drove most people around her half mad. For Tsvetaeva's greatest passion was always for her poetry, and for the extremes of experience that made the writing possible. In a 1928 poem entitled "A School for Verse" (or, alternatively, "Conversation with Genius"), the offshoot of a private course in poetics she administered to a charming and highly literate young *mountain climber*, Tsvetaeva protests—and answers for—the almost intolerable burden of her vocation:

> "It's torture!"—"Endure!"
> "My throat's a mown meadow!"
> "Wheeze:
> That too is a sound!"
>
> "It's a business for lions,
> Not women." "It's child's play:
> Even disemboweled—
> Orpheus sang!"
>
> "And so to the grave?"
> "And from the grave, too."
> "I can't sing!"
> "Sing of that!"
> (*Translated by Jane A. Taubman.*)

Tending her genius, abetted by history, Marina Tsvetaeva lived the life her poems required.

SHE was, first of all, a poet of Moscow, so sure and exuberant in the possession of her native city that as a young woman she habitually bestowed it, embodied in her poems, on whomever she loved. Most of all she loved the supremely accomplished, snobbish, "foreign" poets of St. Petersburg—Aleksandr Blok and Akhmatova and Mandelstam—who led the literary field, and for whom, in their yearning toward European culture, her Moscow was no more than a provincial backwater. The party in St. Petersburg that Tsvetaeva attended at New Year's of 1916 was her chance to prove not only her own worth but the possibility that a poet might come out of Moscow and, still more astonishing, choose to go back. Despite her suspicion that to some of the more refined local ears she sounded like "a Moscow coachman," she was aware of having a great success and of "elevating the name of Moscow to the level of the name of Akhmatova."

Anna Akhmatova was the dark lady of literary Petersburg, whose melancholy glamour and poems of wounded love had won her a huge cult: the Garbo of Russian poetry. Although Akhmatova was not present at the reading, she remained for Tsvetaeva the measure of her performance and of how she defined herself. Akhmatova was only twenty-six to Tsvetaeva's twenty-three, but their personal hierarchy was fixed—less, perhaps, by any disproportion between their gifts or their reputations than by the lifelong propensity of Akhmatova to be adored and of Tsvetaeva to do the adoring. (Although Akhmatova was a legendary beauty and Tsvetaeva declared herself "shamefaced at my own plainness," the photographs reveal no such extremes.) Later that year, after her trip to St. Petersburg, Tsvetaeva wrote a series of eleven poems to Akhmatova—addressing her, "Oh, Muse of lamentation, most beautiful of muses!"—in which she brashly but formally presented her with the city of Moscow "and my own heart in the bargain," dispatching both to an apparently indifferent recipient. There was no response; or, rather, there was a response that took twenty-four years to appear. For the moment, Tsvetaeva comforted herself with a story, told her by Osip Mandelstam, that Akhmatova carried the poems around with her everywhere, and that, upon hearing a description of the "remarkable" intruder on her territory, Akhmatova had demanded, impatiently, "But can one fall in love with her?"

In fact, Mandelstam had fallen in love with Tsvetaeva, apparently won over by the stubborn loyalty she displayed in reciting poems in praise of Germany while the Great War raged and while the German name of Sankt-Peterburg itself had been translated to Petrograd. The most exquisitely Petersburgian of poets—which is to say, the most classically pure and cerebral—Mandelstam was also, at twenty-five, the most tender, and he was soon travelling back and forth between his city and Tsvetaeva's so often that an acquaintance asked whether he worked for the railroad. During the late winter and spring of 1916, Tsvetaeva led her "foreign guest" on a path of discovery through her ancient, long-deposed capital, and wrote for him poem after poem filled with the heavy allure of gold domes, dark chapels, and pealing bells.

She began one poem, quite simply:

> Take from my hands, my strange,
> my beautiful brother,
> This city not made by hands

And, accepting the gift, the great classicist replied:

> In the walls of the Acropolis sorrow
> consumed me,
> For a Russian name and Russian
> beauty.

Mandelstam, for his part, was writing for the first time of Russia and, with far greater hesitancy, of love. (His most famous poem up until then begins "I am given a body—What am I to do with it?") Tsvetaeva saw from the start that, while the poems they wrote for each other might last an eternity, the fretful young poet himself wouldn't alight for long. She raised no objections, but wrote of her "divine boy" at times with a teasing and almost Hellenic sweetness, as though mimicking his own calm tradition:

> Where does this tenderness come from?
> These are not the—first curls I
> have stroked slowly—and lips I
> have known are—darker than yours
>
> as stars rise often and go out again
> (where does this tenderness come from?)
> so many eyes have risen and died out
> in front of these eyes of mine.
>
> and yet no such song have
> I heard in the darkness of night before,
> (where does this tenderness come from?):
> here, on the ribs of the singer.
>
> Where does this tenderness come from?
> And what shall I do with it, young
> sly singer, just passing by?
> Your lashes are—longer than anyone's.
> (*Translated by Elaine Feinstein.*)

When Mandelstam indeed ran off for good that summer of 1916, fleeing a shared country idyll with hardly a warning, Tsvetaeva's liberating gifts to his poetry stayed with him. This was what she had promised him, in order that, as she concluded one poem, "you won't repent that you loved me."

Free spirit though she was, Tsvetaeva was not unconcerned with repentance; she was by this time a married woman and the mother of a little girl. (The romance with Mandelstam was not her first infidelity. A lesbian affair with the

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poet Sofia Parnok had been conducted so openly that the two women lived together for months, in 1915, while Tsvetaeva wrote lines like "my beloved sisters, / we shall certainly find ourselves in Hell!" and her husband moved in with his sister.) Tsvetaeva had met her husband, Sergei Efron, at the Crimean beach resort of Koktebel in 1911, when he was seventeen, a tragic-eyed boy making a shaky recovery from tuberculosis. An aspiring writer himself, Efron was duly impressed with this eighteen-year-old paragon who had already published a book of poetry. The two spent the summer together, writing poems and stories about their childhoods—neither having yet acquired much more of a subject—and were quietly married in Moscow in late January of 1912. Ariadna Efron, known as Alya, was born in early September.

There were no new poems until Tsvetaeva began writing to her year-old daughter. "My verses are my diary," she proclaimed. "My poetry is a poetry of proper names." Sergei Efron, too, inspired his share of poems: works of gentle regard, notably sexless, concerned with nobility and innocence. In just a few years, Tsvetaeva would write a play about a young woman who awakens to the awful knowledge that she doesn't love her husband, and makes up her mind to run off with a wise, older man, who turns out to be a vision and disappears. Tsvetaeva, convinced throughout her life that her "Seryozha" could not get along without her, veered wide but did not, in fact, run off. (It was left to Akhmatova to pronounce, on the basis of her own experience, that the "institution of divorce was the best thing mankind ever invented.") Whether as the cause or as the result of one of her chronic marital reconciliations, Tsvetaeva gave birth to Irina Efron on April 13, 1917, three days before Vladimir Lenin disembarked at Petrograd's Finland Station.

TSVETAEVA had written her first anti-revolutionary poems within a week of the February uprising in Petrograd. The phone lines between the two cities had been cut, and, lumbering along in the late stages of pregnancy, she went out among the frenzied crowds filling the Moscow streets as the news spread and saw there only ashen, indistinguishable figures: "They have no faces, they have no names / They have no songs!" On the day of the czar's abdication, she recorded a prayer that Moscow might lie down "to eternal sleep!" For Tsvetaeva, such thoughts represented not a political position, in any standard sense, as much as an emotional and even an aesthetic one. By the fall of 1917, she was inveighing against Nicholas II, and she came to blame no less a figure than Peter the Great ("Sire of the Soviets . . . Sire of the rubble—it's *your* doing— / These monasteries in flames!") for setting the course of squandering and high-handed carelessness that had led directly to the horrors of October.

Tsvetaeva actually more or less missed the October coup—at least, as it was carried out in Moscow. Efron was serving as an instructor in the infantry reserve, his fragile health deteriorating under the strenuous work. Tsvetaeva had travelled to the Crimea for a respite from domestic responsibilities and in the hope of finding a restful place where the family could pass the winter. But her plans came to nothing, and after a few weeks she boarded a train back to Moscow, ignorant of the events that had occurred in her absence. The first newspapers that she saw made the situation clear, detailing the Bolshevik takeover and the street fighting, and suggesting casualties in the thousands; the regiment still holding out around the Kremlin was Sergei's. Her journey home was a slow agony, marked by continual delays and dead stops, by passengers with vying rumors of chaos and reprisal. Fearing the worst, she wrote a long and adoring letter to her husband: "If God performs this miracle and leaves you alive, I will follow you like a dog."

In Moscow, Efron hung on until the final surrender. The next evening, husband and wife boarded a train back south, she accompanying him as far as she could on his way to join the White Army along the Don. Then Tsvetaeva set out yet again for Moscow, in order to fetch the children back to the comparative haven of the White-controlled Crimea, near their father. But this time, when she reached Moscow, all escape routes from the stricken city closed behind her.

A TWENTY-FIVE-YEAR-OLD woman not weak but unworldly almost by vocation, who neither professed nor displayed any skills beyond the writing of verse, whose parents were dead and whose husband might well have been, Tsvetaeva was lacking, moreover, in any instinct for cunning or self-preservation, or even for what might be called mere getting along; and she now had to get along not only for herself but for two small children in a devastated world. She managed by selling her dwindling possessions, by pocketing food from the tables of friends, and by reciting, for a small fee, at some of the poetry readings that had long been a part of Russia's richly vocal poetic tradition but had taken on a new urgency in those early Soviet years, when publishing nearly ceased for lack of paper and ink.

Still, Tsvetaeva was fully capable of refusing her fee for a reading—as a protest against the fee's smallness and against the new society's failure to value a poet's work. And the poems that she did read in public, quite fearlessly, were often the rhetorically overcharged paeans to the White Army which she was composing in the name of her distant and heroic husband: "Gallant White Legions! White stars that, steep, inde- / Faceable, span the skies!" At the same time, more privately, she was turning out impassioned poetic tributes to various men on so frequent a basis that a single poem might have to bear up under several sequential dedications. Nor were her loyalties irreconcilable with a poem she called simply "Bolshevik," its subject a stalwartly unseducible eighteen-year-old Red soldier—his shoulders stretched "From the Ilmen to the Caspian waters"—just back from Crimean battlefields. For Tsvetaeva, the literal embrace of the men of both sides was—at least, politically—not an evasion of principle but the embrace of a principle beyond politics:

This man was White now he's become Red.
Blood has reddened him.
This one was Red now he's become White.
Death has whitened him.
(*Translated by Elaine Feinstein.*)

By late 1919, the squalor into which Tsvetaeva and her children had plummeted was notorious. She herself described her apartment's state of "cold, puddles, sawdust, buckets, pitchers, rags—everywhere children's dresses and shirts." Each day, she went on a round of institutions to collect enough food for her girls, then aged seven and two, and that autumn, faced with the limits of her endurance and the terrors of winter, she put the children in an orphanage outside Moscow and moved in with friends. Alya, the elder and favored daughter—her mother's trained companion, a small fount of memorized verse—soon became ill and had to come home to be nursed. While she was recovering, in February, 1920, Tsvetaeva received notice that little Irina had died of starvation.

There followed two months of very few words, after which Tsvetaeva wrote a single poem about her lost child, insisting that, as a mother, she had held on "fiercely, as best I could!" She then buried her grief in a new love affair, which yielded a new cycle of poems—twenty-seven in all. Life resumed, even a little easier than before. Admirers saw to it now that she was supplied with a ration card, and she could afford once again to be generous. (When a young poet named Mindlin moved in with her for a time, her newfound domestic abilities caused a friend to protest, "Why wash *his* shirts? He's a terrible poet.") And then, in July, 1921, several months after the White Army's final defeat and nearly a year since she had heard any news of Sergei Efron, a letter finally arrived. She started a new poem at once—"Alive and Well!"—even as she made plans for her departure, to meet her husband in Berlin, feeling "like a bull, / Under the axe head / Of happiness."

THE evacuation of the White Army from Russia had left Efron in Constantinople, and he had gone on to settle in Prague. By the time he made his way to Berlin to meet Tsvetaeva, after a separation of four and a half years—"I need nothing, except the fact that you are alive," he had written her—she was too caught up in an affair with her new Berlin publisher to express the sentiments that might have reasonably been expected. Her diary does not even record their reunion. Efron quickly retreated to Prague, where he had been given a stipend for study at the university (as were all displaced Russian students who applied). Almost as quickly, Tsvetaeva broke with her publisher (soon to be identified in her correspondence as "the black velvet nonentity") and, packing up her life yet again, doggedly set out after the man she had driven away.

Russian writers in Czechoslovakia were also awarded stipends, and although Tsvetaeva lived what Efron called the "life of a camel" there for three years, in a muddy outlying village, she was enormously productive, turning out a quantity of lyric and longer narrative poems and the first play of a verse trilogy she planned to call "The Rage of Aphrodite." Her dramatic heroines were Ariadne, Phaedra, and Helen, and her subject was the compulsions and costs, for women, of erotic love. (Only two plays were completed. Vladimir Nabokov, who met Tsvetaeva in Prague and became an admirer of her work after her death, wrote that her "Phaedra" caused him "astonishment and a severe headache.")

She knew her subject. In 1923, Tsvetaeva suffered vigorously, first over a young critic in Berlin, whom she knew through an admiring review of her poetry and then through his letters, and whom her intensity simply frightened away. ("I cannot tolerate the slightest turning of the head away from me," she warned him. "I HURT, do you understand? I am a person skinned alive, while all the rest of you have armor.") That fall, she moved on to a full-blown affair with a friend of Sergei's named Konstantin Rodzevich, which turned out to be a high point of private anguish and professional accomplishment. The most unknowing and unconcerned of muses, Rodzevich also quickly found Tsvetaeva's intensity unbearable, and is spied in her poetry chiefly in the posture of escape—in the long psychological narrative called "Poem of the End," about their final walk together through the streets of Prague, and in the poem that has become Tsvetaeva's most popular and frequently anthologized work, "An Attempt at Jealousy," written after a chance encounter with Rodzevich and his suddenly acquired fiancée, in 1924:

How's your life with the other one—
Easier?—A stroke of the oar!—
Like the coastline
Does it take long for the memory to recede

Of me, a floating island
(In the sky—not on the waters!)
Souls, souls! you should be sisters,
Never lovers—you!

How's your life with an *ordinary*
Woman? *Without* deities?
Now that you've dethroned your Queen
(Having stepped down yourself).

* * *

How's your life with goods
From the market? Is the price steep?
After Carrara marble
How's your life with plaster

Dust? (From a solid block was hewn
A god—and smashed to bits!)
How's your life with one of a hundred-thousand—
You, who have known Lilith!

Are you sated with the newest thing
From the market? Having cooled to magic,
How's your life with an earthly
Woman, without a sixth

Sense? Well, let's hear it: are you happy?
No? In a shallow bottomless pit—
How's your life, my darling? Harder than,
Just like, mine with another man?
(*Translated by Barbara Heldt.*)

Tsvetaeva's long seizure of passion for Rodzevich nearly tore Efron apart, and he began now to ponder going back to Russia—as "a wounded animal crawls back into its lair," he wrote to a friend. He saw his wife clearly in her "hurricanes" of self-deception, yet he could not bring himself to leave: "I am at one and the same time both a lifebelt and a millstone round her neck. It is impossible to free her from the millstone without tearing away the only straw she still has to clutch. My life is utter torment."

Tsvetaeva was six months pregnant when she wrote "An Attempt at Jealousy." She was ecstatic when, in February, 1925, she gave birth to a son: she had dreamed of a strong, heroic boy-child at least since Irina's death. Georgi Efron was lovingly nicknamed Mur—after a clever tomcat out of E. T. A. Hoffmann—and he became the pride of her life, the only force in it equal to her poetry. There was, of course, much gossip in Prague circles about Rodzevich and the child's paternity. In fact, Tsvetaeva had been vetoed by Efron in her desire to name her son for yet another man—one who clearly was not the child's father. "He was Boris for nine months inside me and ten days outside," she wrote in explanation to Boris Pasternak, who was becoming the pivotal figure in her intellectual and emotional experience even though, by her contrivance, they were almost never to meet. During the months before childbirth, looking back on Rodzevich and all the others, Tsvetaeva wrote, "They have *always* parted with me that way, except B.P., with whom my meeting—and *consequently*, my parting—is still ahead."

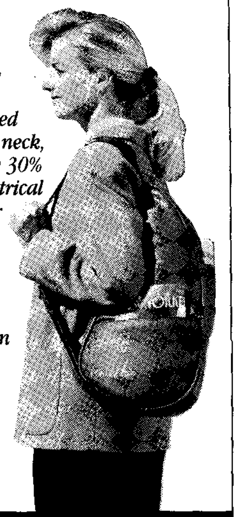
"MY dear, golden, incomparable poet," Pasternak had saluted her in his first letter, sent from Moscow to Berlin in June, 1922. He had just read her most recent collection. Rushing out to find and read his poems in her turn, Tsvetaeva responded with a reciprocally effusive letter, and also with her first critical essay, published in a Russian-expatriate journal: "This is not a review. It is an attempt at release, so I don't choke. I've discovered the only contemporary for whom my lungs are inadequate."

Tsvetaeva and Pasternak were natural counterparts. Passionate Muscovites, both had grown up in families steeped in German culture; each worshipped Rilke as the Orpheus of the age. Both had received strict musical educations, and the manipulation of pure sound into meaning marks their work in similar ways. And, perhaps most important, both were consumed with the otherworldly aspect of the poet's calling, and found reality a near-impossible premise for living.

Pasternak, recently married, came to Berlin with his wife in the summer of 1922; Tsvetaeva left for Prague a few days before his arrival. "My favorite kind of relationship is otherworldly: to see someone in a dream. And the second is correspondence," she wrote him. But when, the following March, he reevaluated his attempt at exile and decided to return to Moscow, she was filled with anguish: the news had come too late for her to get to Berlin to say goodbye. In the days before Pasternak's departure and in the weeks afterward, Tsvetaeva wrote a lyric cycle to him of ten poems—poems filled with a hard, bruising force of desire rarely associated with the love poetry of women:

So suffer me through and survive me! I am everywhere:
I am dawns and ores, bread and breath;
I am and I shall be and I shall obtain
Your lips the way God will obtain your soul.

This is a fragment (translated by Simon Karlinsky) of a longer poem, as



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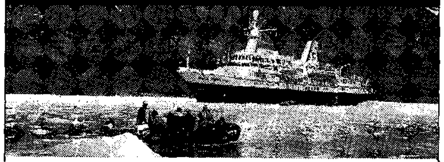

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is the following (translated by Peter Norman), which was written two days later:

> Patiently, as stone is crushed,
> Patiently, as one waits for death,
> Patiently, as news ripens,
> Patiently, as revenge is cherished—
>
> I shall wait for you.

Tsvetaeva waited for Pasternak, in her fashion, throughout her Prague years, and in late 1925 she moved to Paris with her family and waited there. They had gone in the hope of finding a larger audience for her work in the city that had taken over from Berlin as the center of Russian-émigré culture, and Tsvetaeva was soon publishing in all the relevant journals. She drew a tremendous crowd—as though for a performance by Chaliapin, Efron noted—at a public reading she gave in February, 1926. Some of the excitement surely had to do with the political spirit of the White Guard poems that she often read, and also with the dramatic power of her voice, which was, by contemporary testimony, overwhelming.

But, success or no, the family remained stuck in poverty. Efron, as usual, had no work, and Tsvetaeva wrote poetry less and less frequently, turning instead to essays, which paid better. In the spring of 1926, she succeeded in estranging herself from almost the entire Paris *Russe* community with an angry polemic called "The Poet on the Critic," in which she attacked by name those influential arbiters who judged poets according to their politics. She argued that certain poets in the Soviet Union were writing not only the best Russian poetry of the day but poetry that did full honor to the sacred tradition that the Soviets were presumed to defile. Tsvetaeva saw her task as the defense of genius: the genius of the daredevil Bolshevik spokesman Vladimir Mayakovski and, above all, of Pasternak.

"Four evenings in a row I have thrust into my coat pocket a fragment of a haze-moist, smoke-dim Prague night, now with a bridge in the distance, now with you there, before my very eyes," Pasternak wrote her from Moscow that March, after coming across a privately circulating, unpunctuated typescript of her "Poem of the End." The faltering of his marriage doubtless made him especially susceptible to Tsvetaeva's epic of love's exhaustion, and to its author. Within a month, he announced his willingness to leave his wife, child, and country: "Answer me as you have never answered anyone before, as you would answer your own self. *Shall I join you now or within a year?*" A year was the limit he could bear, he told her, and the time would, moreover, be useful for completing some vitally important work. Trembling on the brink, he warned, "If you don't stop me I will come now, and *only to you*, but empty-handed and with not so much as an inkling as to where to go from there or why."

It seems a kindness that she answered with a letter he found "chilling," informing him that a visit at the present time would not fit in with her plans to take her children to the seashore. In later years, she referred to his proposal as an averted "catastrophe" for their families. But, more than that, her poems to him—and his greatest value to her *was* in her poems to him—depended on longing, and therefore on absence. The poet already had what she wanted, and mere happiness would have made a poor exchange. Pasternak continued, briefly, to advance his suit but soon settled into a grateful "You sat me down to work," and promised to send her his latest poems. In the meantime, as proof of his devotion, he was making her the extraordinary gift of Orpheus himself; that is, of Rainer Maria Rilke.

Pasternak had only recently begun an exchange of letters with Rilke, who was living in isolation in Switzerland, and it was at Pasternak's request that Rilke now sent copies of his "Sonnets to Orpheus" and "Duino Elegies" to Tsvetaeva. She responded eagerly and sent him her own "Poems to Blok." By mid-May, 1926, the two were in regular correspondence. But Pasternak's gift did not stand him in very good stead; her letters to him now became cruel, edged with contempt. To Rilke, the angelic poet, Tsvetaeva could write with loving discernment, "You alone have said something new to God." That she was soon confounding angel and man—seeking a body for that most disembodied of poetic voices—is ironic but perhaps inevitable; she took three years off her age (she was thirty-three) when she described herself to him, and assured him, too, that she weighed "*nothing*." Within months, she was writing to him, almost begging: "Rainer, I want to come to you. . . . I want to sleep beside you . . . And nothing else. No, more: to sink my head into your left shoulder. . . . nothing else. No, more: and even in the most profound sleep to know you are beside me." She proposed that they meet somewhere in the French Savoy.

Rilke, who had been as welcoming and nearly as hyperbolic up to this moment, now answered gently but evasively. He was concerned that he had come between her and Pasternak, and he was troubled by her demands of exclusivity. Recognizing the familiar signs of withdrawal, she justified her desires. "Love lives on exceptions, segregations, exclusiveness," she wrote, but she reassured him, too, that her words had been merely "a manner of speaking. A manner of loving." And, with a wretched honesty (if it is honesty), "Do you imagine that I believe in Savoy? Oh, yes, like yourself, as in the kingdom of heaven. . . . Dear one, don't be afraid, simply answer yes to every 'Give'—a beggar's comfort, innocent, without consequences. . . . The word, which for me already is the thing, is all I want."

Rilke was then fifty years old, and was aware that he was ill, although he didn't yet know that the illness was leukemia. He had written her seven letters and one major poem—"Oh the losses into the All, Marina, the stars that are falling!" And now the words stopped. She assumed that he was angry with her, that she had driven him away. Perhaps she had, because in these last months of his life, despite his ever more debilitating weakness, he did answer, through a secretary, the letters of other people. But not hers. She learned of his death just before New Year's (Rilke died on December 29th) from some people who had come to invite her to a party. Her final letter to him, in the form of the great New Year's elegy—"*S novym godom—svetom—kraem—krovom!*"—was completed in February.

In their grief over Rilke and in honor of his memory, Tsvetaeva and Pasternak began to write each other again after months of bitter silence, but the results were predictably strained and fitful. Still, her unchanging belief in Pasternak's achievement came through in two luminous essays she wrote about him during the following years. "Mayakovsky acts *upon* us, Pasternak—*within* us," she said. "Pasternak isn't read by us: he takes place in us." But her path was diverging from his ever more widely. After 1930, when Mayakovski committed suicide—a stunning rebuke to the system that had banked on his performance as the buoyant revolutionary—Pasternak became the officially lauded Soviet genius. Showered with privileges (and, eventually, a large dacha), the hero of one Stalinist writers' congress after another, he yet retained the sympathy of his noncomplying old friends—now largely outcasts and victims—because of the evident confusion and torment he felt at finding himself in such a position. (The greatest Russian translator of Shakespeare's tragedies, Pasternak played the Hamlet of the Revolution, much as Mayakovski had been its Mercutio.)

In 1935, Pasternak was ordered to Paris as a guest of honor at the International Writers' Congress in Defense of Culture, an anti-Fascist, pro-Soviet intellectual rally. He appeared to many to be ill, and his meeting with Tsvetaeva, so longed-for nine years earlier, now became an almost formal event, in which he was introduced to her family and was asked to provide information about the Soviet Union. Tsvetaeva's husband and children, worn down by relentless poverty and eager to believe the newly efficient Soviet propaganda, were pressing her to go home. Trapped in his official role and in a state of shock and supreme fatigue, Pasternak told them very little. Of what he did say, it is impossible to imagine the tone of voice—some historians believe that Tsvetaeva missed the irony—with which he confided, "You will come to love the collective farms."

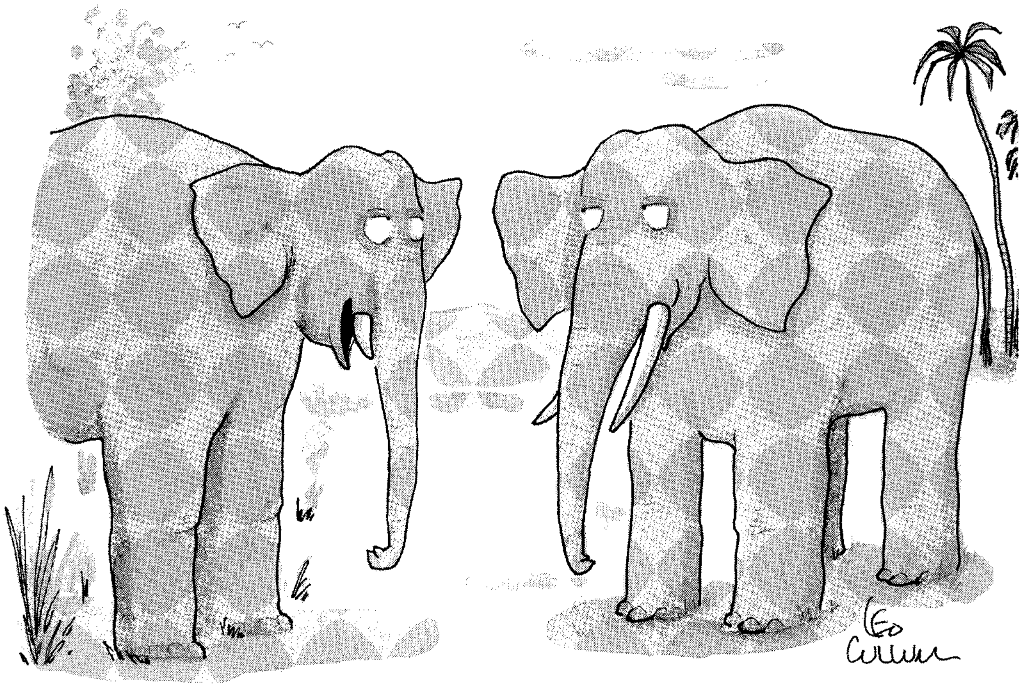
It was not Pasternak who was responsible for Tsvetaeva's return to the Soviet Union, however, but Sergei Efron. He had found work, at last, with a political organization that was, as it turned out, a tool of the N.K.V.D., the Soviet secret service. Drawn into their activities, Efron in 1938 was implicated in several murders and was arrested by Paris police. Released pending further questioning, he escaped, through Spain, to the Soviet Union. Ariadna Efron had already gone, and Tsvetaeva, left with thirteen-year-old Mur, found herself not merely isolated—she was used to isolation—but the victim of pointed opprobrium. Nina Berberova tells of Tsvetaeva standing alone at the funeral of a friend, a Russian poet; no one would go up to her and speak. No one could believe that she had not known of Efron's treason. In June, 1939, after securing safekeeping for her manuscripts and her precious letters from Rilke, the woman who had once written so confidently, "I would have been able to say to Orpheus: 'Don't look back!' " and had faulted the blindness of Eurydice's love packed her bags and followed her husband into Hell.

TSVETAEVA'S return to Moscow, with Mur, went unremarked. She came not as a renowned poet but as a former supporter of the White Guard and the wife of a disgraced Soviet agent. She and Mur were sent to an outlying house reserved for such pariahs and their families, where they were reunited with Sergei and Ariadna. Tsvetaeva later wrote in her diary, "The overtone and the undertone of everything: horror." In August, Ariadna was arrested; she went on to spend seventeen years in northern prison camps and internal exile. Sergei was taken away that fall. He was shot, as far as can be determined, in 1941.

Evicted, despised, without work or money, and with Mur as well as herself to support, Tsvetaeva appealed to Pasternak, who refused at first to see her—"It's dangerous," he warned a friend—but arranged for her to receive translation work and meals at a Writers' Union club outside Moscow. When the price of the meals was raised beyond her means, the following spring, she began searching for a room in the city that had once been her own. "For a year now," she wrote to Pasternak, "I've been looking for a hook. . . . For a year I've been trying on death. Every way is ugly and frightening. . . . I don't want to die, I want not to exist."

Yet there were bouts of what amounted to a kind of normalcy even in this period. She found a place to live (thanks to Pasternak), she published a poem (albeit an old one), and she was even asked to prepare a manuscript of her selected works for an official Soviet publishing house. True to form, however, she only brought on official wrath, by including in her manuscript, as Viktoria Schweitzer has shown, none of the poems—such as "Homesickness," a wistful admission of an émigré's yearning for the Russian landscape—that might have allowed her to seem a grateful prodigal returned. Instead, she began with a poem written for Sergei in his White Guard days, which she dedicated, openly and dangerously, "To S.E."

And after all the years of distant adu-



"I love the way you use your bulk."

lation she was introduced, at last, to Akhmatova. The two women sat talking together for hours, although they were united now more as terrified mothers, it seems—Akhmatova was in Moscow to petition for her son's release from prison—than as poets. (When each recited from her recent work, the result was mutual incomprehension.) Akhmatova could not bring herself to present Tsvetaeva with the one poem she had finally written for her, in March, 1940, entitled "Belated Reply," in which Tsvetaeva's famous Moscow bells have become funeral bells, and in which, taking on Tsvetaeva's voice, Akhmatova moans of how "An abyss has swallowed my loved ones / And my parents' home has been pillaged."

In June, 1941, Germany attacked Russia, and a month later Moscow was being bombed. Tsvetaeva and her son managed to get out on August 8th, on a boat taking evacuees to Tatarstan. They arrived in the tiny town of Yelabuga on August 17th, and were given a room requisitioned from a local family, an old couple who lived with their grandson. Looking for work, Tsvetaeva ventured to the larger town of Chistopol, where a settlement for writers better regarded than she had been established. After much petitioning and outright begging, she secured a residence permit and the possibility of a job as a dishwasher in the writers' canteen.

While in Chistopol, in despair, Tsvetaeva was recognized and taken in by sympathetic admirers. Assured of the little circle's approval and asked to recite from her work—they requested the old "Poems to Blok"—Tsvetaeva chose instead to recite "Homesickness," but was too shaken to get through to the end. Slipping away, she returned to Yelabuga. Three days later, while Mur and the others were out, she found her hook; actually, it was a nail, "Used for the yokes of horses, too low to / reach for, still less hang from," if a poem written by Yevgeny Yevtushenko decades later is to be trusted. (Yevtushenko concludes, "Remember: there is only / murder in this world. Suicide has no existence here.")

It was the old woman of the house who came home first and found her. It was a Sunday afternoon, August 31st, two years after Ariadna Efron's arrest. A note to Mur, found in Tsvetaeva's apron pocket, asked his forgiveness, and added, "If you should ever see Seryozha and Alya, tell them that I loved them until the last minute." (He never saw either one. Drafted into the Soviet Army, Mur died in battle in 1944.) The old woman of the house was asked about her strange boarder many times in later years, first by lone pilgrims and later by literary societies and school groups and biographers, until the house became something of a museum and she was tired of trudging to the gate. She replied to the most frequently asked question by saying, rather quizzically, that there had been plenty of food left at the time—a sack of "rice and pearl barley and different kinds of meal"—and that surely "she could have kept going longer," that "it would have been time enough when they'd eaten it all."

NADEZHDA MANDELSTAM, whose memoirs of life and death under Stalin exhibit an exacting discrimination among degrees of tragedy, claimed to know of "no fate more terrible than Marina Tsvetaeva's." Russia's foremost widow was weighing the fates of those poets who, with their burden of witness and conscience, have stood out, from so many victims, as the Soviet Union's exemplary dead. ("Why do you complain?" Osip Mandelstam once chided his wife. "Poetry is respected only in this country—people are killed for it.") By the logic of this system, it may be seen as the last indignity that Tsvetaeva was left to manage her death entirely on her own. The lack of any specifically directed state persecution—such as that which killed Mandelstam and silenced Akhmatova and finally threatened (and canonized) Pasternak—denied her even the compensation of worldly consequence, that sense of dangerous importance for which Western writers have guiltily envied Soviet suffering. The revival of Tsvetaeva's literary fortunes offers little by way of political instruction, except in her aspirations beyond all ideology and public poses; her victory is in the intense, womanly privacy of the poems themselves. Yet, even deprived of the full force of her poetry, awaiting the translator who will reimagine her powers for English readers, Tsvetaeva draws us deep into her presiding myths, her life as large and unnerving and painfully exalted as the lives of the Phaedras and the Ariadnes for whom she tried to speak. ♦

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BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Disclosure

by Michael Crichton

(Knopf; $24)

DESPITE all the talk, the plot of "Disclosure" has very little to do with what the author refers to as the "evolving issue" of sexual harassment. This is a straightforward thriller, about intrigue in a high-tech communications company in Seattle, that will probably be appreciably more thrilling when it is made into the movie it is clearly designed to become. The bland hero is Tom, a well-liked executive, and the cool villainess is Meredith, with whom Tom once, long ago, had an affair, and who now comes unexpectedly to town as his new boss. Meredith sexually assaults Tom and, when he resists, turns the tables and charges him with harassing her. Tom quickly finds himself a victim of reverse discrimination and the radical-feminist mind-set: his word is taken to be worthless against Meredith's, and he's ostracized and vilified as a pig. Naturally, he fights back. The sexual encounter, though, proves to be a charade, masking deeper corporate gamesmanship, much as the novel's hot-button issue turns out to be a topical peg for Crichton to hang a conventional mystery on. That "Disclosure" is being written about as though the author actually had something to say on the subject of sexual harassment surely counts as a minor triumph of literary publicity.

Little Kingdoms

by Steven Millhauser

(Poseidon; $21)

IN these three novellas, Millhauser invents worlds within worlds: his "little kingdoms" include the imaginative realms that his characters inhabit. The work-obsessed hero of "The Little Kingdom of J. Franklin Payne" is a newspaper cartoonist at the New York *World Citizen* in the nineteen-twenties and a pioneer of motion-picture animation. Millhauser fills Franklin's office with gorgeous detail—you can almost smell the rice paper, India ink, and Venus pencils. The author's realism, however, is challenged by Franklin's surreal imaginings, in which teapots become elephants, for instance, and, in the end, the ordinary world becomes as remote as the dark side of the moon. "The Princess, the Dwarf, and the Dungeon" is a sinister fable about the consequences of a prince's unfounded jealousy. And "Catalogue of the Exhibition: The Art of Edmund Moorash (1810-1846)" chronicles the career of a diabolical nineteenth-century American painter. It is both a superb evocation of the Transcendentalist era and a gentle parody, complete with professorial commentaries on nonexistent paintings, overreaching biographical conjecture, and a loyal sister prone to headaches and attacks of vertigo. Throughout the book, Millhauser records the imaginative life with the luminous strokes of a landscapist and the draftsmanship of a mapmaker.

GENERAL

Exit Into History: A Journey Through the New Eastern Europe

by Eva Hoffman

(Viking; $23)

THE history that Hoffman explores is ancient and contemporary, national and personal, innocent and corrupt. This account of travels through five countries in 1990 and 1991 is charged with the high seriousness that the inhabitants of those countries bring to the effort to reclaim their pasts and comprehend their futures. Intellectuals, who form a large part of the author's Eastern European acquaintance, are as baffled as anyone. "Do you mean," asks one Polish writer, trying to grasp the realities of the emerging capitalist literary marketplace, "that some people will get paid more than others for the same amount of writing?" But it is the past that seems to pose the greatest challenge: Hoffman recounts tales of Communists imprisoned by Fascists, liberals imprisoned by Communists, Jews imprisoned by both. These horrific stories are told with a sensitivity that insures that their similarity never becomes sameness. Her most fascinating portraits are of former members of the Communist establishment: a Polish censor whose work led him to the deconstructionist conclusion that in literature "anything can mean anything"; a Czech professor who complacently describes a life of shameless opportunism; and, in Romania, a truly repentant Party member who, at age seventy, finds "how difficult it is to say that the thing you've been devoted to—the essence and core of your life—has been a mistake."

Still Missing: Amelia Earhart and the Search for Modern Feminism

by Susan Ware

(Norton; $22)

THIS biographical essay uses the life of the famous pilot who disappeared over the Pacific in 1937 to examine the state of American feminism between the two World Wars. Ware is an appealing writer, and the Earhart she describes is an extremely likable person. She was one of a group of women who became pilots in the nineteen-twenties, only to discover that when commercial airlines began hiring, in the nineteen-thirties, the unofficial rule was gender Jim Crow: pilots were men, and women were stewardesses. But Earhart continued to attempt unusual or difficult flights; she and her colleagues believed that women would eventually attain equality through the example of other high-achieving women. In discussing the limitations of this approach, Ware demonstrates a keen sense of period and demonstrates, as well, that Earhart and her generation belong to another American tradition besides feminism—the tradition of optimism. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

GANGLAND STYLE: THE TRANSCRIPT

BY BRUCE McCALL

(*Inaudible*)

GANGLAND STYLE is . . . All they see is, you know, like cement wing tips. Period.

(*Expletive*) media.

Or whacking somebody. That's what everybody thinks Gangland Style is. Just whacking a guy. Stuffing him face up in the trunk of his own Lincoln Town Car.

Whereas, it's so much more.

Right. But to them, it's like, midnight dinners for twenty-eight in bad Italian restaurants where nobody pays the check, and somebody never gets to eat dessert. (*Laughter*)

Yeah, well, it's our own (*expletive*) fault. We keep letting those other (*expletive*) define us.

So maybe we open a theme park. Gangland. Why not? Know what I'm . . . Go public! We got this dump on Staten Island that . . .

Like, the Last Ride. The Money Laundry . . . Crush 'em in a mangle. . . .

Exactly wrong, (*expletive*)-face. Listen what I'm talking, (*expletive*). This here is Mr. Buncombe. Image consultant. We checked him out. He's all right. Mr. Buncombe, here, is gonna help us turn our (*expletive*) image right around. Make room, make room.

BRUCE McCALL

Thanks, thanks a lot, gentlemen. I'm, uh, thrilled to be here today. (*Inaudible*) . . . won't go through all these charts (*inaudible*). In a nutshell, preliminary focus-group research pretty much backs up your gut feel vis-à-vis your current image. Very skewed toward what we call "ultimate negatives." Record-high scores, in fact.

That's like . . .

Death, things of that nature—correct. But don't, heh heh, kill the messenger quite yet, heh heh, because . . . But look at this chart, please.

(*Expletive!*)

Exactly! In short, fifty-two per cent of those interviewed say they fantasize at least some of the time about the Gangland experience. With males only, seventy-nine per cent. Very high among the young males, of course, but here's a surprise . . . numbers for income earners over a hundred thousand annually.

(*Expletive*) daydreaming . . .

Right, and that's the key. Even they secretly want to be . . . you know, like you. Frankly, this excites the hell out of us. We see it as what we call your "hidden positive." And it's leverage to turn Gangland Style from a P.R. nightmare into a marketing bonanza.

You mean, money?

Strictly legit. Not even the RICO laws could touch us. Gentlemen, imagine a provocative new line of Ravenite Social Club men's fragrances, as redolent of Gangland Style as a punch in the nose. Sir, smell this.

Hmm. (*Expletive*) nice!

That's Cutler. An intimidating blend of Canarsie dock-walloper burliness and the suavity of a six-hundred-dollar-an-hour uptown lawyer, with just that piquant hint of marinara sauce. Gunmetal packaging, the works. Now you, sir. Smell this.

Kinda like, um, lavender and gunpowder?

Perfect. That's Made Man. Makes ladies swoon and men cross to the other side of the street. We've already roughed out an ad campaign. Then, I have here . . . *Look at this. Try it on.*

A (*expletive*) bathrobe?

Not just another bathrobe. Gangland Style leisure wear, branded The 247 Mulberry Street Collection, by Vincent the Chin. Believe me, this will take Sutton Place and Greenwich by storm.

Who's hungry? Wanna order out?

Don't bother, sir. Over here (*inaudible*) . . . Gangland Style Mean Cuisine.

I'll be (*expletive*)!

Quick-cooking, microwave-ready tubs of your favorite linguini, tortellini, spaghetti, with all the fixin's. Enough per serving to feed a whole Family, so to speak, heh heh. Sorry. Just a little . . .

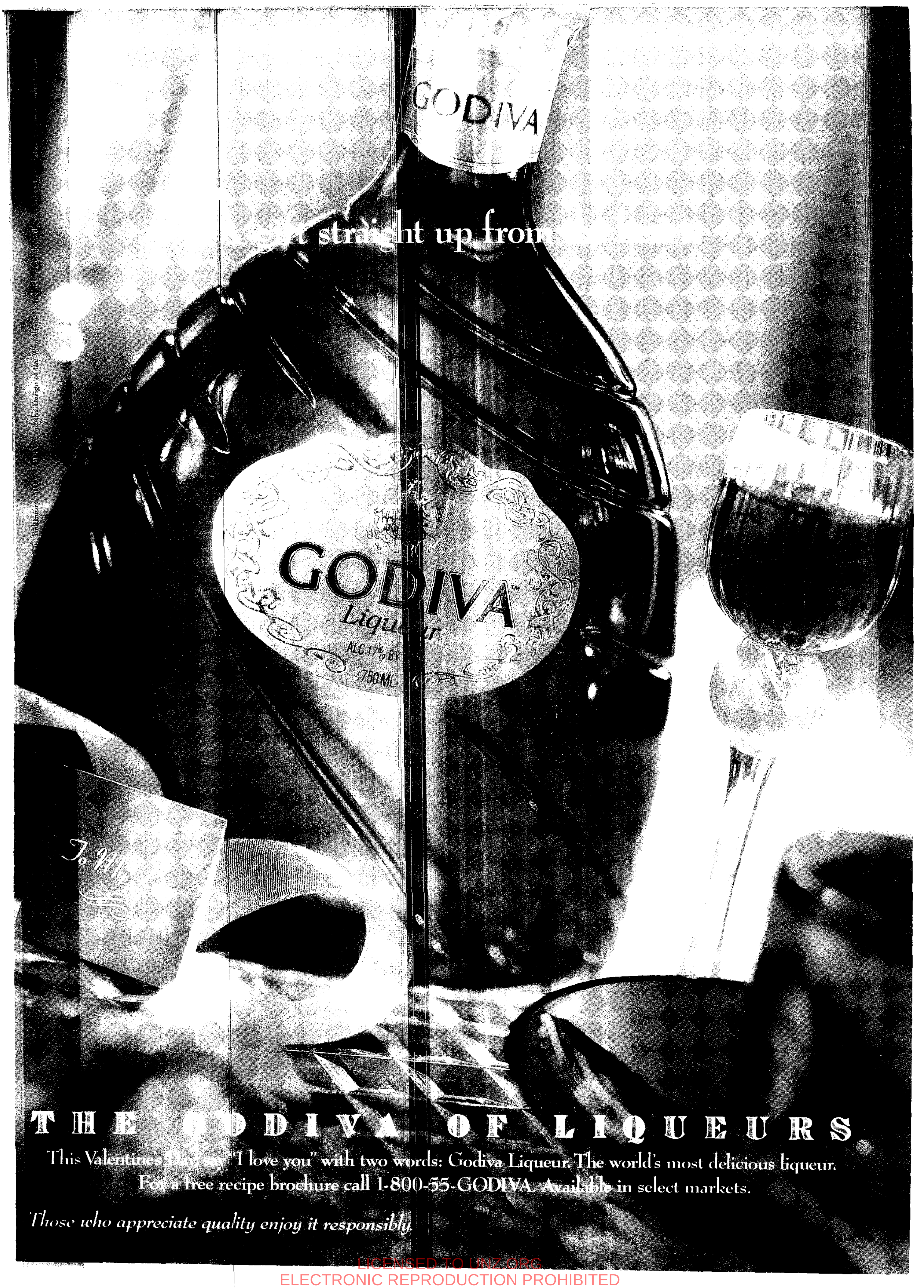
I got it! "Gangland Style—a whole new way of life, for those who live on the edge!"

Excellent! We could make a move on the self-improvement category. Books and cassettes. "Improve Your Confidence, Gangland Style." "A Thousand and One Ways to Beat the Tax Man, Gangland Style." Weekend seminars. A thousand bucks a pop.

"Gangland Style. It ain't just cops 'n' robbers anymore!"

Now you're talking. Video games. Ladies' fashion wear . . . Why not? Sky's the (*expletive*) limit.

This here Mr. Buncombe's given us a lot to think about. Somebody . . . You—give him a ride home. You know what I'm saying? ◆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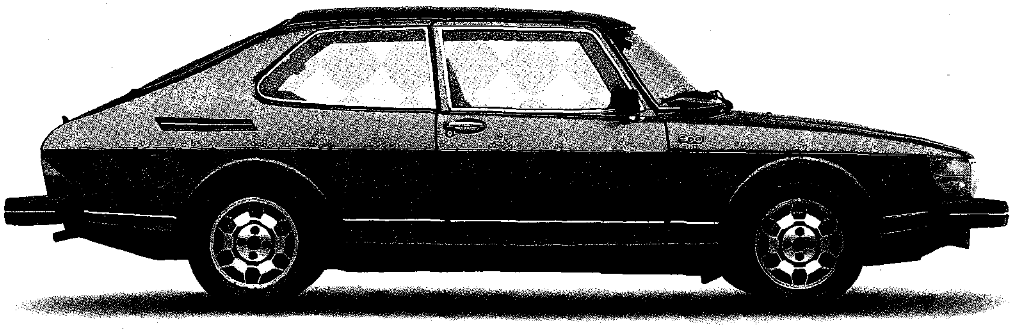
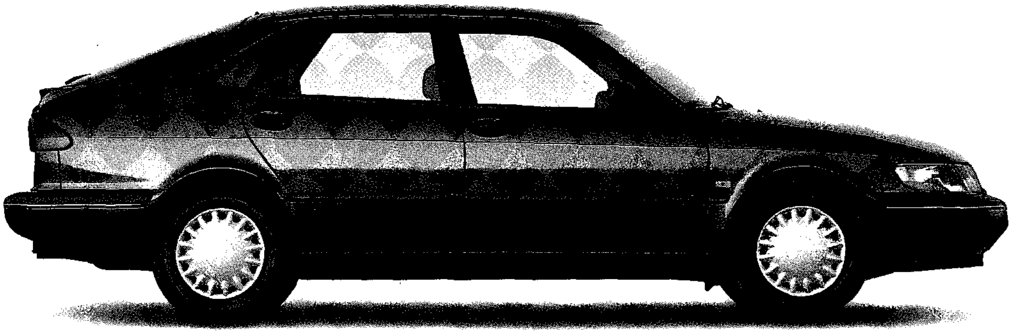


1979: TECHNOLOGICAL LEAP.



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